



Kensington & Chelsea NEWS

LWN

LONDON WEEKLY NEWS GROUP

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Thursday, February 26th 2015

New leisure centre 'absolutely stunning'

FACILITIES at the new £29.4 million Kensington Leisure Centre, which will open its door to the public for the first time on Monday, have been described as "absolutely stunning".

The new complex, adjacent to the Kensington Aldridge Academy, includes a 25-metre swimming pool, 20-metre teaching pool, 250-seat gallery, 120-station gym, an eight-court multi-use sports hall, two fitness studios, sauna/steam facilities and treatment rooms.

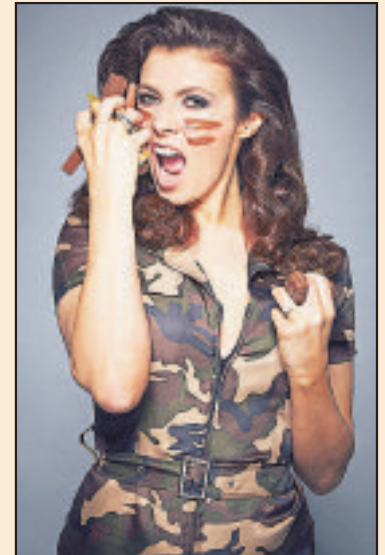
Built by Kensington & Chelsea Borough Council, Tim Ahern, Cabinet Member for Leisure, said: "The new leisure centre is absolutely stunning and we can legitimately boast that it is one of the best in London with facilities to rival the top private gyms."

PHOTO FEATURE ON THE NEW LEISURE CENTRE - see page 6



■ **FITNESS FANATICS:** Kensington Leisure Centre manager Oliver Stacey pictured with members of staff outside the new building which will open to the public on Monday, March 2nd.

INSIDE YOUR BRIGHT NEW LOCAL



Why Kym Marsh is urging you to give up chocolate for a month

- see page 7

DOGS SUFFERING 'HORRIFIC CRUELTY'

MPs call for end to backstreet breeding

FIFTY seven outraged MPs are leading a backbench campaign to stamp out the "horrific and cruel" practice of backstreet breeding of dogs which is rife in areas of Kensington and Chelsea and across west London.

The MPs have teamed up with TV star Paul O'Grady to back a demand by Battersea Dogs & Cat Home for the government to step in and end the huge trade of underworld puppy farming.

Rogue breeders across west London are making easy money by forcing helpless dogs to have litters of puppies again and again and again, and then dumping them on the streets when they can breed no longer. North Kensington is believed to be a particular black spot for the forced-farming.

Backstreet breeding is wrecking the animals' health

● By LWN reporter
GEOFF BAKER

to the extent that some are left so ill that they have to be put down. Often, unwanted puppies are thrown out on the streets and left to die.

Now the dogs' home is taking action to expose and shame the puppy bandits - as research shows that one in five of the badly-bred dogs dies before it is six-months-old.

Breeding machines

Thousands of dogs across the UK are being used as breeding machines by uncaring owners who are keeping bitches in filthy conditions that have appalled staff at the world-famous dogs' home.

Battersea Cats & Dogs Home has launched an appeal to the public to help them exert pressure for a change in the law and almost 60 backbench MPs have already

rallied to the call. The home also wants the public to stop buying dogs online, where many of the puppies from forced-bred dogs are sold by unscrupulous and unqualified breeders.

Paul O'Grady, the comedy star who has won National TV Awards for his series "For The Love Of Dogs" and who works as an ambassador for the dogs home, said he was "sickened" by the growing black market breeders who are conning the public to believe that puppies come from a good home.

He told *The Kensington & Chelsea News*: "I've seen first-hand the poor, damaged dogs in Battersea's kennels that have been bred from over and over again. It sickens me to think what these dogs go through before they're dumped on the streets broken and unloved."

"The awful thing is that backstreet breeders are everywhere lining their pockets from the demand for puppies."

"If there's one thing we can all do it's to make sure we think about where we're getting a puppy from. Visit a rescue centre or a registered breeder and help Battersea end backstreet breeding."

Battersea Dogs & Cats Home's chief executive Claire Horton said: "We are urging prospective dog owners to think twice about how they buy a dog."

"We have to crack down on the horrific and cruel practice of backstreet dog breeding."

"Relentless breeding of dogs in dirty, squalid conditions takes place in neighbourhoods up and down the



Putting youngsters back on their feet

- see page 14

Council approves another austerity budget

KENSINGTON and Chelsea councillors approved their fifth austerity budget on Thursday of last week.

Over the past five years the council's revenue budget has fallen by £48 million, mainly due to a reduction in government funding.

But the council tax stays pegged for the sixth

year in a row, making it the fifth lowest in the country.

Officials claim that the range and quality of services has been maintained due to "a radical austerity strategy" and £12 million in savings by sharing services with neighbouring boroughs.

Full report on page 3

■ TURN TO PAGE 3

THE paper serving the **HEART** of London

Rewarding volunteers who support policing in London

Council tax cut for Special Constables

THE Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has confirmed that all serving special constables who live in the capital will be eligible for a £150 council tax cut, as he delivers on his pledge to reward those uniformed volunteers who support policing.

The Mayor committed in his *Police & Crime Plan* to reconnect the police with the public by boosting volunteering and rewarding those who offer their time in service. This follows his 2012 manifesto pledge to offer special constables a 50 per cent rebate on the Mayor's share of council tax.

In a letter sent to all 4,000 specials in London, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Stephen Greenhalgh, sets out the details of the scheme and how to apply. The new scheme is the first of its kind in London and has been designed by the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) and the Greater London Authority.

The payment – which is worth up to £450 to those special constables who already have three years' service – will apply to all those who have

completed their minimum monthly service of 16 hours and who live in a London household that pays council tax. The payment also applies to specials living in London serving with the British Transport Police and City of London Police.

Boris Johnson said: "My manifesto promised a council tax discount for special constables and this payment delivers on that pledge. Special constables are a vital link between the police and the community whilst representing the very best of London's volunteering spirit. This payment goes some way to recognise the huge contribution that specials make to keep our city safe."

Stephen Greenhalgh said: "Special constables will continue to volunteer, unpaid, in support of regular



FROM THE
MAYOR'S
OFFICE

Met police officers, but we hope this council tax rebate demonstrates how the Mayor values their efforts. I especially enjoyed observing their contribution up close on the recent Big Wing Day involving Specials across London. We want many more people with diverse backgrounds and expert skills to step forward to support the police as volunteers, and I am delighted that members of our Special Constabulary are now getting the recognition they deserve.

Vital and valued part of The Met

John Conway, chief officer of Met Special Constables, said: "The MPS welcomes this new initiative from MOPAC and believes it will act as a positive incentive to encourage more new specials to join the Met. Special constables are a vital and valued part of the wider Met family, giving up their own time and contributing valuable professional skills in order to help provide a high quality of policing services to the public and their communities. We will be encouraging all those existing and new specials who qualify for the rebate to apply for it."

● The Special Constabulary is the United King-

dom's part-time police force. It is made up of volunteer members of the public who when on duty wear a uniform and have full police powers. There are now nearly 4,000 and an additional 300 serving in either the British Transport Police, or City of London Police in the capital.

● To be eligible for the MOPAC scheme, a special constable must be in good standing (contributing 16 hours service or more a month); not under any disciplinary action; a resident in a London borough or the City of London; and live in a household which is liable for council tax. The scheme comes into effect on 1 April and will in effect offer a payment of £150 to qualifying special constables.

● The Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) has consulted with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) in order to accommodate and mitigate the potential tax implications that arise as a consequence of this payment. MOPAC, on behalf of the Mayor, will pay the tax due on this payment.

● Special constables who wish to apply should follow instructions in the letter and this year's scheme is open to applications until 20 March 2015.



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(Established 1857)

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(Established 1857)

Kensington News

(Established 1869)

London Weekly News

(Established 2014)

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Apprenticeship Scheme

WESTMINSTER City Council is committed to helping young people into employment and is very proud of the apprentices on its Apprenticeship Scheme. It has been a huge success with positive feedback from both apprentices and line managers.

Apprenticeships are an excellent way of gaining qualifications, work based skills and experience with all apprentices provided with relevant workplace placements and training from a recognised OFSTED provider.

The council's current apprenticeship programme is delivered in partnership with the London Apprenticeship Company with opportunities at the council advertised on their website.

Kensington & Chelsea

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Council tax pegged but more pain to come

THE Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea's Cabinet has set its fifth austerity budget.

Over the five year period, the council's revenue budget will have shrunk by some £48 million; a reduction primarily driven by falls in grants from central government, say council officials.

However, despite those falls, the council tax will not be increased - in fact, 2015-16 will be the sixth year of continual freeze. And, according to council leader Nick Paget-Brown, residents' experience of services won't have changed significantly either.

Maintaining the range and quality of services, and keeping the council tax the fifth lowest in the country, has been made possible by a radical austerity strategy adopted by the Cabinet from 2010 onwards.

The strategy has three components:

- Sharing services, notably management, with our neighbouring boroughs. This will yield savings of £12 million by the end of 2015-16;

- Traditional savings and efficiencies which in 2015-16 will amount to £4 million and;

- Strong stewardship of our property estate. This is playing an increasingly important role in our strategy with the result that property income will rise to £9.5 million in 2015-16 from £3.8 million in 2010-11.

The strategy of sharing, savings and stewardship has again enabled the Cabinet to protect council services and actual service reductions will play no significant part in the 2015-16 budget, which will be debated by the full Council on 4 March and can be read online at www.rbkc.gov.uk

At the same time, due to strong reserves built up over many years, the Cabinet is also able to move forward with a very ambitious capital programme to secure the future of Kensington and Chelsea.

The projects include a new leisure centre opening in March 2015, the rebuilding and expansion of three primary schools, new affordable homes and new

'extra care' housing for older residents.

But as the council starts to pay some large bills on those projects reserves are forecast to shrink considerably, from £160 million next year to £105 million by 2018.

'Along the way we have faced some testing decisions'

Cllr Paget-Brown has warned, however, that despite the good news contained in the council budget, more years of austerity lie ahead. In his 2014 autumn statement, the Chancellor revealed that in order to continue to reduce the national deficit, large reductions in public spending will be necessary and it is likely that local government will again play a disproportionate role, mainly to protect funding for the National Health Service and for schools.

The council anticipated this and has reduced spending not just in order to cope during this parlia-

ment but in order to be able to absorb the impact of a second phase of austerity after the general election.

"The three Ss of sharing, saving and stewardship have served our residents very well and are the best means of enabling us to face some further years of austerity with confidence," said, Cllr Paget-Brown.

"Along the way we have faced some testing decisions but those have so far been about doing things differently rather than not doing them at all. We mean that to stay the case for as long as we can possibly manage."

Despite the decision to continue the freeze on council tax, the council in January ordered an exception to be made for homes that have been left empty for two years or more. From April 1st these will pay a 150 per cent rate. This will affect about 600 properties of a total of nearly 88,000 residential properties.

● NEWS FROM NICK - read the Leader's Column on page 4.

Call to expose and shame 'callous breeders in it for the money

■ FROM PAGE ONE

UK, so Battersea has launched a major campaign calling for a clamp down on the many undercover dog breeders that profit from the cruel treatment of these animals.

"We want a ban on the sale of puppies under eight weeks old and the introduction of a breeding licence requirement for any household producing two or more litters per year.

"Battersea is speaking out to help expose and shame the callous breeders in our communities who are creating far too many unhealthy, unwanted and abandoned dogs all in the name of personal profit.

"At Battersea we see the consequences of this problem every day, with strays coming through our doors, many of whom show signs of in-breeding and others that have been used to produce countless litters before being turfed out on the street.

"These puppies and breeding bitches are often tomorrow's status dogs and we must put an end to such inhumane, money-making activities."

Battersea says dogs used for backstreet breeding are forced to lead a miserable life. They are frequently

kept in cramped, uncomfortable conditions, are often never exercised and used to produce litter after litter, with no thought for their health.

"Exhausted and under socialised, these dogs are all too often thrown onto the streets once they have served their purpose," says the home.

Marjorie, a two-year old Bulldog, arrived at Battersea as a stray in November 2014. She was bald in places, unable to sit down due to a prolapsed womb, had long curled claws, withdrawn and showing obvious signs of overbreeding.

Worried by noises

"It was obvious from the moment Marjorie (pictured) arrived that she had suffered a traumatic start to her life. The big, gentle soul came to us in very poor condition, looking as though she had been neglected by her previous owners and had not given the care she needed and deserved.

"The withdrawn bull dog had extremely stretched



teats and a prolapsed uterus that made it painful for her to sit down. Mentally she was very shut down and withdrawn. Bull dog puppies come with a hefty price tag, so it's likely Marjorie has been used numerous times to make some fast cash.

"For a dog in her condition, Marjorie showed herself to be a trusting a loving girl who enjoyed a cuddle. However she was very worried around unfamiliar noises and even toys, as she didn't seem to know what they were.

"It became clear that Marjorie was not used to socialising in a natural environment and especially with other dogs as she was quite reserved and showed a lot of caution around them at first - all signs of being used time and time again for breeding.

"After a lot of care and dedication from the staff at Battersea, Marjorie began to come out of her shell, showing an affectionate nature and despite her miserable start in life she will get a second chance to go to

a caring, loving home she so deserves," said the home.

"Unfortunately, not all of these dogs will be as lucky as Marjorie. Savannah, a four year old Bull Mastiff, was another stray that came to the charity last year, also showing signs of overbreeding.

"She had been beaten by her previous owners and did not know how to socialise or get on with other dogs. Despite all of the help she received from Battersea, this poor dog had already been through so much that nothing more could be done for Savannah and sadly she had to be put to sleep".

From a 'dodgy source'

Battersea says there are no figures to reveal just how widespread backstreet breeding has become because many people tend not to admit they got their dog "from a dodgy source".

However, YouGov research by the home revealed that 30% of respondents said they wouldn't pay anything for a new dog, suggesting that people still believe they can pick them up for free via the internet.

"Backstreet dog breeding is a bit of an underworld that even the Government can't shed any light on," said a spokeswoman.

"The best evidence we have is the consequences of backstreet breeding in terms of 130,000 dogs taken in each year by UK dog welfare organisations, 112,000 stray dogs picked up by local authorities each year. The Kennel Club estimates that 20% of dogs brought online die in six months."

Battersea is calling on the public to help by writing to their MP to urge for the backstreet breeding issue to be put on the political agenda. For more details of the campaign, go to www.battersea.co.uk

Urgent action called for to deal with capital's throw-away food

LONDON is facing a crisis over the 2,500 tonnes of food thrown away every day in the capital - authorities are warning that unless "urgent action" is taken the city will be overflowing with rotting rubbish in the next 10 years.

The Greater London Authority is calling for the Mayor to find new ways of dealing with the 890,000 tonnes of food that is binned each year.

The GLA warns that landfill sites will be full by 2025 and, with the capital's population booming, and extra one million tonnes of thrown-away food will have to be dealt with.

As fears rise that piles of wasted food would cause an explosion in rats, mice and urban foxes, the GLA is calling on the Mayor's Office to institute a new programme forcing all London boroughs to have rubbish collections for food waste to be recycled.

There are an estimated 10,000 urban foxes in the capital and at least 8,000,000 rats.

With food waste accounting for around 20 percent of domestic waste, the London Assembly Environment Committee has published a critical report which highlights the need for local authorities to address the way they deal with the food that Londoners are throwing away

The report: 'Bag It Or Bin It? Managing London's Domestic Food Waste', examines how household food waste is managed and explores strategies to make recycling easier and more cost-effective for residents

LONDON WIDE

and local authorities. Of the 33 London boroughs, only 23 were found to be offering any separate food waste collections. The Committee is urging all local authorities to implement separate food waste collections, regardless of property type, to improve consistency and the capital's overall recycling performance.

Key policy

The report asks the Mayor to get Government money for separate collections and to do more to support schemes like the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and Recycle for London.

The report highlights that new treatment facilities are also needed as an extra one million tonnes of food and green waste will have to be processed to cope with London's growing population.

Currently around half of London's separately collected food waste is sent to composting and anaerobic digestion facilities outside London to be treated.

The report says: "Food waste is a huge environmental problem and sending that waste to landfill is especially harmful to the environment.

"There is political consensus that reducing the amount of landfilled bio-waste is a key policy priority. In London, the Mayor recognises that processing food waste will play an important role in boosting the city's recycling and composting rates. Sending less of London's food waste to landfill is becoming an urgent priority for practical reasons too: the Greater London area contains very little landfill capacity, and sites out-

side its boundaries accepting its municipal waste are expected to be full by 2025.

"In recent years, London has greatly reduced the amount of domestic waste it sends to landfill, but food waste still accounts for around 20 per cent of its household waste. London also does not stand out nationally for its success in recycling - while recycling rates vary widely across the capital, there is particularly low participation in inner London.

"London urgently needs to introduce or extend food waste recycling in its high-density housing stock.

"Although more expensive, providing a separate collection for food waste can go some way towards improving an authority's overall recycling performance.

"Therefore we recommend that boroughs should endeavour to include separate food waste collections in their waste management regimes across all property types. Additionally, reliable data on food waste is scarce and this limits local authorities' ability to plan for effective service provision. We argue that more should be done by those involved in planning and managing waste and recycling to improve data collection on food waste."

Chairmanhair of the Environment Committee Stephen Knight said: "We realise that cost is a major factor when local authorities' make recycling choices, but separate food waste collection schemes need not be more expensive. If London is to maintain its status as the second most sustainable city in the world, we need to be informed about what is available to us, so we can play our part and stop wasting food."

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Rehousing council tenants during regeneration

KENSINGTON and Chelsea Council has set new guidelines for compensating and rehousing tenants and leaseholders affected by regeneration schemes on Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation managed estates.

The principles were developed as part of ongoing planning for the redevelopment of the council offices at Pembroke Road and the council will now seek to apply them to any future schemes.

Kensington and Chelsea will only redevelop a council estate if it is possible to rehouse all existing tenants in better homes in the new development or in the nearby area (unless they choose to move elsewhere). This commitment is in addition to all the usual statutory compensation and disturbance allowances.

In addition the council will try to offer all resident leaseholders on an estate access to a

shared equity scheme of the kind being piloted at Pembroke Road, to enable them to buy a home in a new development, even if it is worth more than their original home.

This offer will depend on the viability of each regeneration project, but would also be in addition to all statutory compensation and disturbance allowances.

These new commitments mean that existing communities would be kept together if and when regeneration projects go ahead, rather than being displaced and dispersed.

Explaining the principles behind these commitments Cllr Rock Feilding-Mellen, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing, Property and Regeneration, said: "Despite austerity the Council still has many ambitions for the future of this borough.

"One of the most important is housing and the regeneration of some council estates. We want

the best possible homes for our existing and future tenants. We want more affordable homes, especially for those on low to middle incomes, who have been squeezed out of the private market but are ineligible for social rented housing. We want to preserve and strengthen our mixed communities that have made Kensington and Chelsea such an attractive place to live for people of all backgrounds. We want to tackle the causes of deprivation in some of our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. And we want to

build new homes that will be considered beautiful and desirable for generations to come.

"This is all achievable and realistic, thanks to long years of careful financial stewardship by the council and because of the underlying value and comparatively low densities of council-owned land and housing.

"But this regeneration is something we want to do working with residents and these new commitments are all about showing tenants and leaseholders that we are serious about that."

Shopwatch for Portobello Road

KENSINGTON and Chelsea police are piloting an initiative to protect shoppers and businesses within the Portobello Road area.

Funded jointly by the police and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, ShopWatch will allow participants to send information through a new Message Distribution System, warning one another of suspected shoplifters, pickpockets and those committing antisocial behaviour in the area.

Working alongside the shopkeepers and police are CCTV operators. They will receive in-

formation from the shops about suspected criminals. The operators then warn other shops of the suspect and direct police to their location.

All messages will be received by the local policing teams covering the area. They can work on the information and will be able to deploy uniformed and plain-clothes officers quickly to the location.

So far 40 shops have joined the Message Distribution Service and more are signing up. If you are interested in joining the ShopWatch scheme contact the local policing team on 020 8721 3005.



NEWS FROM NICK ...

with Nicholas Paget-Brown,
Leader of the Royal Borough
of Kensington and Chelsea

Council proposing to make surcharge on empty homes

Kensington and Chelsea set a budget last week. It still needs to be approved by the full Council on 4 March and I dare say some heated debate will ensue so those of you who enjoy a bit of a row could do worse than to pop along to the council chamber on that Wednesday evening.

Personally I'm quite proud of our budget. With one small exception, there are no council tax increases, and no significant loss of services either. That's pretty good I think, given that we are in the fifth year of national austerity.

But fear not, I am not going to spend this entire column hammering on about our balance sheet. Instead I want to focus on that small exception I just mentioned: from April this year, we will start charging a 150 per cent council tax on homes that have been left empty for over two years.

On current figures, that means the some 600 council tax payers will be paying half as much again on their homes.

Now as a conservative, I instinctively think homeowners should have some latitude about what to do with their own property, but as someone once said, your liberty to swing your arm stops at my nose.

To take a recent example, when you have hundreds of mega-basements all being dug at the same time, that is a metaphorical punch on the collective nose of the citizenry and so the Council took action.

I think the same principle applies with long-term empty homes.

The problem with leaving homes empty for months and years is that once there are

hundreds doing it, our streets start to lose their vitality and our shops their trade. And if there is a serious housing shortage at the same time that hundreds of homes are being left empty, well in my view that starts to put a bit of a strain on the old social fabric.

So that, in a nutshell, is why we have introduced this council tax surcharge or premium, call it what you will. Not that many other councils have done so. One that has is Camden and it reports that the surcharge has helped to reduce the number of empty homes. I hope the same happens here in K and C. In the meantime it will raise a mod-

est but useful sum of money to help keep our services to residents running.

But please don't start thinking that the surcharge is all we are doing to help relieve the housing shortage. It isn't. Those of you who are interested can find out more about our efforts at www.rbkc.gov.uk

The problem with leaving homes empty for months and years is that once there are hundreds doing it, our streets start to lose their vitality and our shops their trade.

● **ASK NICK: A conversation with the Council Leader.**

Cllr Nick Paget-Brown wants to know what the Council is doing well, what we can improve and hear any of your suggestions for the future.

Come along to the latest Ask Nick event on Thursday, March 5th 2015, 6pm refreshments, starts 6.30pm at the Second Church of Christ, Scientist, Palace Gardens Terrace, W8 4RT
www.rbkc.gov.uk/asknick

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■ WINNERS: Environment Minister Dan Rogerson pictured with Cllr Richard Beddoe, Westminster City Council Cabinet member, and the winners and runners-up.

Westminster wins Keep Britain Tidy award

A CAMPAIGN to encourage dog owners to take responsibility for their pets and clean up after them collected one of the top honours at Keep Britain Tidy's Diamond Jubilee Awards Ceremony in Liverpool.

Westminster City Council's *Your Dog, Your Responsibility* campaign won the Keep Britain Tidy Network's Campaign of the Year Award, sponsored by Helping Hand.

The council's campaign aimed to tackle dog fouling and promote responsible dog ownership. It featured a diverse range of activities and initiatives, including micro-chipping events, the targeting of dog fouling hot spots, using promotional stickers on 250 litter bins across the borough, installing 800 dog fouling enforcement signs and distributing 40,000 'poo bags'.

Westminster City Council was one of 11 winners whose achievements were recognised at the ceremony, in the presence of Environment Minister Dan Rogerson MP and Keep Britain Tidy's Ambassador, TV presenter Kirstie Allsopp.

The awards celebrated the exceptional contributions that Keep Britain Tidy's partners and supporters have made to the local and global environment.

Cllr Richard Beddoe, Westminster City Council cabinet member for city management, said: "This is an excellent achievement and the tremendous improvements that we witnessed since the launch of the campaign stands as a testament to the hard work, ambition and innovation of those involved in the project."

Phil Barton, Chief Executive of Keep Britain Tidy, said: "Congratulations to Westminster City Council for winning the Keep

Britain Tidy Network Campaign of the Year Award. The project is exceptional and, in the 12 months since the campaign was launched, has seen residents who see dog fouling as a problem drop to a ten-year low. Well done to everyone involved in this engaging campaign."

The City of London's "No small problem" campaign and Blackpool Council's Rover project came runner up in the Campaign of the Year category.

Environment Minister Dan Rogerson said: "The kind of innovation and creativity shown by the nominees and winners of these awards plays a huge role in inspiring this action and I congratulate them on their efforts to keep our neighbourhoods clean and tidy. I hope their success inspires more initiatives across the country to help manage waste and keep England litter-free."

Victory for the hacks in Parliament pancake race



Photo by: Ray Tang/REX

FOR sheer brutality Prime Minister's Question Time has nothing on the annual pancake race which takes place on Shrove Tuesday between parliamentarians and the political press corp.

The hotly contested battle has been taking place in Victoria Tower Gardens, in the shadow of Big Ben, since Tony Blair was Prime Minister 17 years ago.

Every year MPs, peers and political hacks com-

pete for the coveted Tin Cup to raise funds for the disability charity, Rehab.

Last week's race saw a rare victory for the journalists' team, captained by Sky's Sophie Ridge, although there were plenty of complaints about the tactics from the parliamentarians.

Pictured right, Sophie Ridge and BBC commentator Ben Wright practice their pancake tossing before the start of the race.

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LONDON WEEKLY NEWS

Kensington's new fitness centre

Borough's £29.4 million leisure centre one of best in London

NEW FACILITY IS 'ABSOLUTELY STUNNING'

THE new Kensington Leisure Centre will open its doors to the public for the first time on Monday, March 2nd, thanks to a £29.4m investment from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The new centre is one of the very finest in London, say council officials.

For swimmers there is a 25-metre, eight-lane swimming pool, a 20-metre teaching pool with mobile floor, and gala spectators can watch from a 250-seat gallery.

Facilities rival top private gyms

There is also a 120-station gym which boasts the latest cardio and resistance machines, free weights and functional fitness kit from Technogym and D2F.

In addition there is an eight-court multi-use sports hall, two fitness studios and

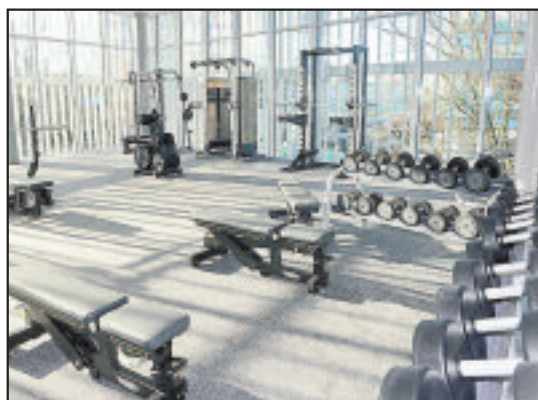
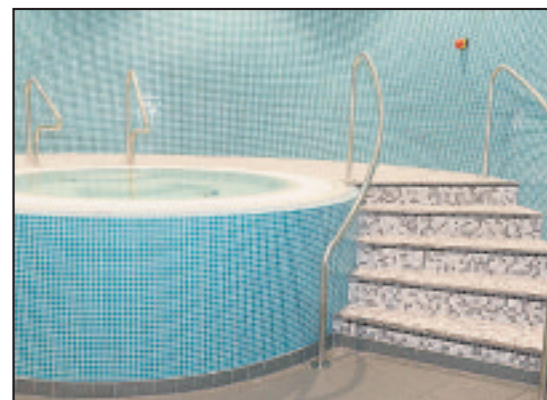
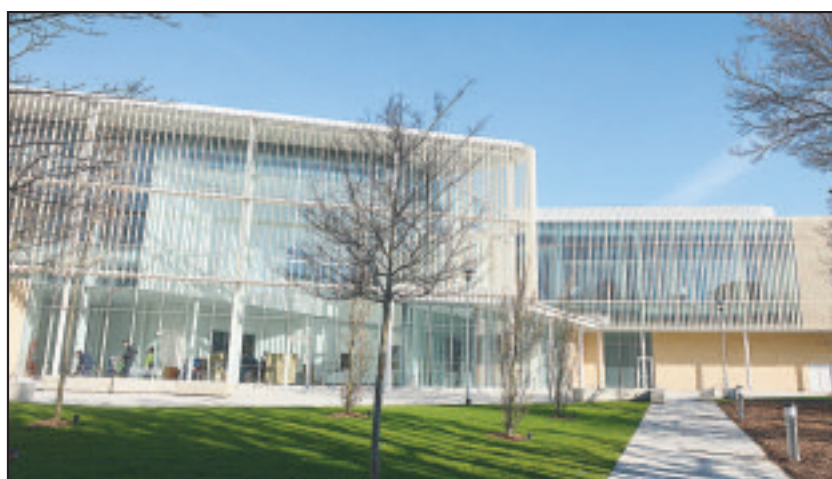
sauna/steam facilities with treatment rooms. And for residents who prefer to take their exercise in classes, a wide range will be on offer, including power pump, group cycle, aerobics, abs blast, step and sculpt, 'bums tums and thighs', box-fit, water workout, yoga, Pilates and Brazilian dance.

Councillor Tim Ahern, Cabinet Member for Leisure, said: "The new leisure centre is absolutely stunning and we can legitimately boast that it is one of the best in London with facilities to rival the top private gyms.

"Physical exercise is one of the most important things we can do to stay healthy and the range of facilities and classes on offer mean there is an activity to suit every age group."

Work on the project began in December 2012 and the new centre, on Silchester Road, replaces one built in the mid-1970s, which itself replaced the Victorian Lancaster Road baths.

● For more information on the new Kensington Leisure centre
visit www.better.org.uk/kensington

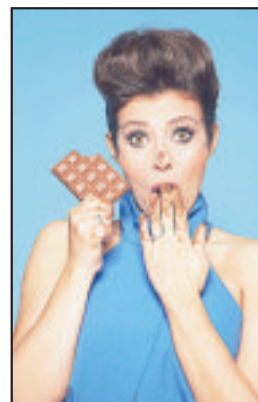


LWN

CHARITY APPEAL



Join
Corrie's
Kym and
give up
chocolate
for your
heart



... but only for a month!

■ I'M writing to you and your readers to encourage you all to join me and quit chocolate for the month of March as part of a new British Heart Foundation (BHF) fundraising campaign: DECHOX™.

DECHOX™ is a sponsored challenge calling on all chocolate lovers in London to give up their favourite sweet treat for the month of March to help raise money for the BHF.

Dechoxers are encouraged to raise money throughout the month by asking friends, family and colleagues to sponsor them to take on the challenge. They can also donate the money they've saved from ditching a cheeky chocolate bar at work or that naughty dessert after a meal out.

I have been personally affected by the issues surrounding heart disease. My father has had both a cardiac arrest, at the age of 49, and a heart attack two years ago, when he was 67, while my son, David, contracted a heart infection last year, despite having no known pre-existing heart conditions. So I know the terrible effect that heart disease can have on a family.

That's why I'm encouraging everyone in London to join me and take part in DECHOX™ and give up chocolate for the month of March to help raise money for lifesaving heart research. It's going to be difficult for

people who love chocolate, like me, but we'll all be in it together and it's for such a great cause.

Anyone can sign up to DECHOX™ for free at bhf.org.uk/dechox. You can also take part on social media by using #DECHOX and sharing your stories and tips for giving up chocolate. Join me and we can fight for every heartbeat together.

Kym Marsh
Actress

●ABOUT the British Heart Foundation

For over 50 years the British Heart Foundation (BHF) has pioneered research that's transformed the lives of people living with heart and circulatory conditions. The BHF's work has been central to the discoveries of vital treatments that are changing the fight against heart disease. But so many people still need help, from babies born with life-threatening heart problems to the many mums, dads and grandparents who survive a heart attack and endure the daily battles of heart failure. By joining the fight for every heartbeat in the UK, every pound raised, minute of your time and donation to BHF shops will help make a difference to people's lives. For more information on the BHF, visit bhf.org.uk

Where To Find Your New Local Newspaper

FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

London News**pick up points**

Sainsbury's Store	Melbourne Avenue	West Ealing	W13 9BZ
Tesco Metro	94 Church Street	Paddington	NW8 8EX
Tesco Classic Metro	17-25 Regent Street	London	SW1Y 4LR
Sainsbury's Store	38 Stratton Street	Mayfair	W1J 8LT
Sainsbury's Store	15-17 Tottenham Court Road	Central London	W1T 1BJ
Co-op	504-506 Harrow Road	Paddington	W9 3QA
Tesco Classic Metro	22-25 Bedford Street	London	WC2E 9EQ
Co-op	Golden Cross House	London	WC2R 0RG
Notting Hill Gate Library	1 Pembridge Square	Notting Hill	W2 4EW
Kensal Library	20 Golborne Road		W10 5PF

Westminster & Pimlico NEWS**pick up points**

Sainsbury's Store	99 Wilton Road	Pimlico	SW1V 1DT
Co-op	104-105 Berwick Street	Soho	W1F 0QS
Tesco Metro	18-28 Warwick Way	Westminster	SW1V 1RX
Tesco Classic Metro	Dean Street	London	W1D 3RS
Tesco Classic Metro	10-16 Goodge Street	London	W1T 2QB
Tesco Metro	90-100 Edgware Road	Westminster	W2 2EA
Co-op	19-21 Store Street	Westminster	WC1E 7DB
Pimlico Library	Lupus Street	Pimlico	SW1V 3EY

Kensington & Chelsea NEWS**pick up points**

Co-op	210-212 Earls Court Road	Kensington	SW5 9QB
Sainsbury's Store	158a Cromwell Road	Kensington	SW7 4EJ
Tesco Metro	146-148 High Street	Kensington	W8 6SU
Sainsbury's Store	Ladbroke Grove	London	W10 5AA
Tesco Metro	224-226 Portobello Rd	Notting Hill	W11 1LJ
Tesco Metro	114-120 Notting Hill Gate	Notting Hill	W11 3QE
Tesco Super Store	West Cromwell Road	Kensington	W14 8PB
Kensington Central Library	Philimore Walk	Kensington	W8 7RX
North Kensington Library	108 Ladbroke Grove	Kensington	W11 1PZ
Brompton Library	210 Old Brompton Road	London	SW5 0BS
Chelsea Library	Chelsea Old Town Hall	Chelsea	SW3 5EZ
Chelsea Sports Centre	Chelsea Manor Street	Chelsea	SW3 5PL

Fulham Chronicle**pick up points**

Sainsbury's Store	51 Townsmead Road	Fulham	SW6 2SY
Sainsbury's Store	Fulham Broadway Retail Centre	Fulham	SW6 1BW
Co-op	254 North End Road	London	SW6 1NJ
Co-op	314 Lillie Road	Fulham	SW6 7PS
Co-op	60 Parsons Green Lane	Fulham	SW6 4HU
Sainsbury's Store	2-3 Kings Mall	Kings Mall	W6 0PZ
Tesco Super Store	180 Shepherd's Bush Road	London	W6 7NL
Morrisons	114-116 Shepherd's Bush Centre	London	W12 8PP

LWN NEWSDESK: 07864 992274

Prestigious awards for the Tool Shop Group

THE Central London-based Tool Shop Group has been named British Hardware Federation Retailer of the Year - one of the most prestigious accolades in the hardware business.

Tool Shop was assessed on business etiquette, professionalism, store ambience and reputation.

The Tool Shop Group prides itself on having well trained, committed and empowered staff delivering excellent customer service.

Competing against independents and large multiple superstores, this London SME demonstrated that it is a serious contender in today's competitive DIY market.



Business News

The Tool Shop Group have consecutively performed well and have now won the Britain's Best Retailer Silver Award six out of the last eight years and achieved the coveted Gold Award twice in the last four years. These awards are presented by the industry magazine "DIY Weekly".

"Our formula is simple", says owner Vin Vara, "We have a range of products to suit trade and DIY users, well trained staff and an attitude which puts out customers first. I am particularly pleased for my staff - this award recognises their commitment to our business."

The Tool Shop currently operates with 10 strong specialist shops: two in Waterloo, two in Westminster, one in Kennington, one in Islington, two in Queensway, two in Marylebone, and also a large warehouse situated centrally to service all of their branches.

See Tool Shop ad on page 11

COMING SOON!

The London Weekly News website is currently under construction. In the meantime, if you would like to view the LWN pages digitally, you can access them by clicking onto <http://bit.ly/1vS5sl8>



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Charlie Pipes Up!



Balls would be better off making companies pay their bills on time...

While Ed Balls chases some bloke who trimmed his hedge for a receipt, he should have his attention focused on policy ideas that would ensure businesses get paid on time.

Now don't get me wrong, if you do a job and get paid for it you should pay the relevant amount of tax.

As a plumber I have always been concerned about the 'black economy' with cash in hand deals, which goes hand in hand with poor quality and terrible service, that have played a major part in creating a shady reputation for our industry.

It is a reputation I and many in my industry have battled against to make sure it is consigned to the waste pipe of business practices.

Of course, if this kind of tax avoidance happens on a larger scale it is serious, but chasing up the odd tenner here and there is small beer compared to the billions of pounds owed to companies through late payment.

And while Balls was all over the broadcast media on Sunday (and the morning papers) questioning the moral practices of the nation's handymen, a smaller story was squirrelled away that has a bigger impact on the economy.

According to Bacs research, late payment is resulting in more than three quarters of businesses waiting at least a month beyond agreed terms to be settled.

Late payments have resulted in additional

costs amounting to a massive £8.2bn a year, which is the equivalent of £677 a month for each affected company.

If you think that figure is mind-blowing, consider that Bacs' study has revealed that companies employing less than 250 people are owed a staggering £32.4bn in overdue invoices.

The impact late payments have on small firms can be devastating. It also seriously affects the economy too. Companies are forced to rely on overdrafts or delay paying bills

and staff. Some bosses have taken pay cuts to keep cash in their businesses to cover shortfalls.

This is a practice that has to stop. The government-backed Prompt Payment Code, which encourages better treatment of suppliers, is a step in the right direction as are government proposals to force businesses with more than 250 staff to publish details of how long they take to pay their bills.

However, there is a real need to get tough with these companies for the sake of the country's SME backbone and the economy. Money greases the wheels of business, but if big firms

keep the cash in their pockets for too long the cogs will seize up and firms will have to shed jobs, cancel investments and reduce the amount they pay to the Treasury.

So if Ed Balls wants to try and clamber back any semblance of credibility with the business community he'd be better off switching his focus from odd job men to companies that should pay their suppliers what they're owed on time.

The impact late payments have on small firms can be devastating. It also seriously affects the economy too. Companies are forced to rely on overdrafts or delay paying bills and staff

Views expressed are those of the author and no necessarily those of this newspaper



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1.00pm – 4.00pm Formal meeting of the Governing Body

For more details or to submit a question to the Governing Body please contact Pamela Handy at: lamccg.mail@nhs.net

To see the agenda and supporting papers please visit our website after 25th February 2015: www.lambethccg.nhs.uk/news-and-publications/meeting-papers/governing-body

It's your local NHS - get involved!

For more information on how you can help us shape health services in Lambeth contact: <http://www.lambethccg.nhs.uk/Contact-us/Pages/default.aspx>



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**Improving
health and
reducing
health
inequalities
in Lambeth**





Boris' alter ego to star in new 'Spitting Image' style show

BORIS Johnson is to star in a new TV satire show – as a plastic puppet.

The Mayor of London is to be one of the cast of *Spitting Image*-style characters in a new ITV series which will poke fun at politicians and celebrities.

ITV will start screening *Newzoids* in April as part of its coverage of the run-up to the general election.

It will be the first time that TV has had a political puppet show since the controversial *Spitting Image* ended its 12-year run in 1996.

Mop-haired Boris will be featured in the show preparing to run for Parliament whilst Prime Minister David Cameron fears that he is after his job leading the Conservative

Party. In other sketches he will clash with would-be Mayor Russell Brand over the best way to run London.

Other political figures who will be mocked by the new comedy will include Ed Miliband, Nigel Farage, Nick Clegg and President Putin.

ITV says Ed Miliband will feature in an Ant and Dec spoof called "I'm A Catastrophe, Get Me Out Of Here".

The six-part series will also feature Simon Cowell, Prince Harry, Harry Styles and Lady Gaga. In one sketch already scripted, Professor Brian Cox will discover a new planet which turns out to be Kim Kardashian's bottom.

Young mum up for 'SuperAchiever' award

A LONDON mum has been shortlisted for Working Mum of the Year in Pitman Training's SuperAchievers Awards 2015.

Alexandra Hodgens, who less than five years ago could not speak a word of English but decided to work hard towards a career in accounting to secure a good life for herself and her

daughter, has been confirmed as a finalist in the National Awards. She will now face a high profile judging panel before the winners are announced on Friday, February 27th.

Identified alongside three other nominees in the Working Mum of the Year category, Alexandra was chosen for her incredible perseverance and determination to overcome several obstacles in

order to achieve her career goals.

Russian born Alexandra, came to England just five years ago and even though she did not know the language, she was undeterred and began thinking about how she could best attain a secure future for herself and her daughter.

Whilst learning the language, she came to realise that working with English as a second language, having a young daughter and little

experience would prove a barrier to having a rewarding career.

When thinking about what profession to get into, having already achieved an engineering degree and with a natural flair for mathematics, she decided that accountancy would give her not only excellent employment prospects but also offer her a career which meant she could work without compromising her precious time with her daughter.

After making her decision, Alexandra started to study for her AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians) qualifications with Pitman Training High Holborn, whilst also working part-time.

Keen to achieve her goals, Alexandra managed to complete her diploma within just eight months – four months before schedule. A further true testament to her dedication came almost immediately after achieving her AAT Level II qualification when she gained a position in a Financial Consultancy.

With the support of her husband, all that she has achieved so far has been done with her daughter's future and wellbeing at the forefront of her mind.

Not content with her achievements so far, Alexandra decided to continue her training and is now working towards her Level III Qualification with the hope of be-



■ **DETERMINED:** Alexandra Hodgens with her daughter Victoria

coming a Professional Accountancy Consultant. She says of her daughter's impact on her career: "Sometimes when buried in work

or study, just seeing her cheeky smile gives me all the motivation I need to plough through and succeed in my goal."

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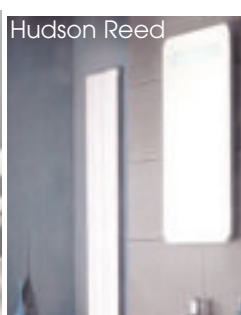
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Superstore toy exchange benefits Barnardo's

THIS year's Argos Toy Exchange provided a bumper bonus for some of the UK's most disadvantaged children, recent figures show.

Barnardo's stores in London received 829 bags of donated pre-loved children's toys worth £9,948, thanks to the partnership with the leading toy retailer.

During the eight-week Toy Exchange campaign with Argos, donations across the UK totalled £663,996.

Barnardo's director of retail and trading, Gerard Cousins said:

"This is the third year of the partnership and we are delighted that the Argos Toy Exchange has again proved such a success, particularly in such a challenging economic climate. The donations we received ahead of the busy Christmas period gave a substantial boost to our stock and provided a real festive bonus.

"Donations are absolutely essential, to keep our stores trading. All profits from selling these toys are ploughed directly into Barnardo's work with vulnerable and disadvantaged children, so a huge thank-you to everyone in the re-

gion who has taken part."

The Toy Exchange is in the third year of a partnership between toy retailer Argos and children's charity Barnardo's. It encouraged Argos customers to donate their pre-loved toys at stores, to be sold through Barnardo's network to raise money to benefit some of the most disadvantaged children and young people across the UK. Those making donations were rewarded with a voucher offering £5 off a £35 spend on toys at Argos, with vouchers valid right up until Christmas Eve.

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Best foot forward for charity in memory of father

BROADCASTER Jonathan Dimbleby is taking on an endurance challenge this summer in celebration of the charity founded in honour of his father, Richard, who died 50 years ago this year.

As chairman of the charity, Jonathan is leading Dimbleby Cancer Care's 50/50/50 event on Friday, June 5th - a 50km walk through London during the night that aims to raise £50,000.

Dimbleby Cancer Care was set up in 1966 in memory of broadcaster Richard Dimbleby and is based at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals in London. It gives practical and psychological support to people living with cancer and to their families and carers.

Jonathan said: "This year kick starts our charity's 50th anniversary. We want to mark the occasion with a great event that also raises lots of money. I've never walked around London at night. It's a long way but I am really looking forward to it - though I haven't spoken to my feet about it yet!"

"We are starting at St Thomas' which is where my father spent his last days. His only complaint was the pillows were too hard. This was the stimulus that made us decide to make a contribution to the needs of people living with cancer."

"I hope that lots of sympathisers will join me to raise the kind of money needed to sustain this work and boost our 'Care for the Future' appeal."

Starting in the evening, the walk's route takes in famous London landmarks including Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace, the British Museum, the Tower of London, Canary Wharf and Greenwich. The event, which is sponsored by

THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR WALKING: Jonathan Dimbleby planning a 50km walk to raise funds for the charity set up in memory of his father Richard. The route is below.



Leon, starts at St Thomas' hospital and finishes at Guy's hospital, the two hospitals where the charity provides its services.

Participants can register as individuals or in groups to take part in the event. If they register before March 5 they will receive a discount on the registration fee.

All the money raised will go towards the charity's 'Care for the Future' appeal, which aims to raise £500,000 over the next two years so that it can continue and expand its work within the cancer community.

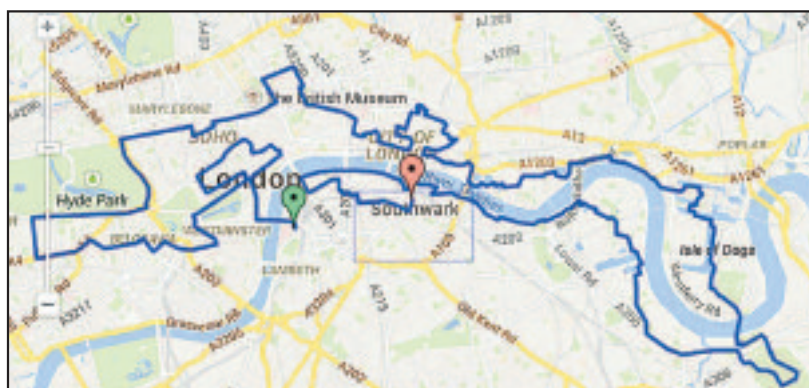
To sponsor Jonathan please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/Jonathan-Dimbleby-50-50-50/>

To take part in the event or for more information please visit <http://www.dimblebycancercare.org/50-50-50>

DIMBLEBY Cancer Care was set up in 1966 in memory of broadcaster Richard Dimbleby and is based at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals in London. It provides practical and psychological support to people living with cancer and to their families and carers.

The 'Care for the Future' appeal aims to raise £500,000 over two years so that it can continue and expand its work within the cancer community, primarily in South East London. The appeal will conclude with the opening of the new cancer centre at Guy's hospital in 2016 where the charity's Information and Support Services for cancer patients will be based. Dimbleby Cancer Care will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2015/16.

Every donation makes a difference, visit www.dimblebycancercare.org/donate to find out how to get involved.



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LWN

NEWS FROM KENSINGTON/WESTMINSTER

editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk



■ OLYMPIA'S kitchen garden

Marking Climate Change Week in the Royal Borough

THE start of March will see a series of free events across Kensington and Chelsea to mark Climate Week, which runs from Monday, March 2nd to Sunday, March 8th, and residents of the Royal Borough are being invited to take part.

The week begins with an opportunity to tour the largest community kitchen garden in the borough as Olympia kitchen garden opens up its doors between 1.30pm and 3pm. Visitors to the garden, set on a disused platform at the iconic Olympia site, can find out how you can grow their own food.

Meet the Climate Change Team, find out more about how to reduce your carbon footprint and pick up some fresh food by visiting Imperial

Farmers' Market on Tuesday, March 3rd from 10am to 1pm or again on Saturday, March 7th at South Kensington Farmers' Market from 9.30am to noon.

Have you ever wondered what it's like to go completely green and give up all the comforts of modern living? Then join the council for a screening of 'No Impact Man', the story of how one man gave up electricity, fossil fuel powered

transportation and shipped food, at Kensington Town Hall on Wednesday, March 4th from 6pm.

Children can also get involved, with eco games and a treasure hunt in Holland Park on Sunday, March 8th from 2pm at the Ecology Centre.

To find out more and see what else is on go to www.rbkc.gov.uk/climateweek or email environment@rbkc.gov.uk

Arts Council funding provides a boost for contemporary festival

THE Royal Borough's annual InTRANSIT Festival of Arts has been awarded funding from Arts Council England, for the purpose of building cultural engagement in the north of the borough.

The Arts Council England Grants for the Arts award complements the council's ongoing commitment to regeneration in the north of the borough, which has seen over £57.4m investment in recent years.

Reflecting the rise of site-responsive theatre nationally, the festival has emerged over the last nine years as an innovative platform for experimentation and new collaborations in art and performance; celebrating space, challenging the role of audiences, responding to current issues and putting residents at the heart of art commissioning.

InTRANSIT works with cutting edge companies such as London

Contemporary Orchestra, Forest Fringe, Cardboard Citizens and New Movement Collective, while also commissioning and supporting new work from emerging artists.

Councillor Timothy Coleridge, the council's cabinet member for arts, welcomed the grant award from Arts Council England and said: "InTRANSIT is our highly respected summer festival, which takes place each year in places and spaces across Kensington and Chelsea.

"It excels in showing the highest quality contemporary arts and culture for the enjoyment of our residents, as well as Londoners as a whole, and our national and international visitors too.

"There is, of course, always more that can be done in bringing art and culture to everyone, so we are delighted to announce that InTRANSIT has recently been awarded an Arts Council England grant to ensure that the festival delivers even more, in particular through working in creative col-

laboration with the many diverse communities of North Kensington."

Following the success of InTRANSIT Festival 2014, production and design team O'Neil/Ross return to curate this year's festival, which runs a month earlier than usual - from Friday, June 19th to Sunday 28th.

A spokesperson for O'Neil/Ross said: "It is wonderful to be able to use elements that are already intrinsic to site-responsive performance - location, architecture, society - to contribute to positive change.

"It doesn't feel forced; all of our artists and companies are working in the community, with residents and local institutions, because it is a key part of their process.

"Kensington and Chelsea is an extremely varied borough, which makes this an extremely relevant and challenging place in which to produce work."

For more information and latest festival news visit www.rbkc.gov.uk/intransit.

"Government help to access professional advice boosted our bookings"

Marcus Whittington, Managing Director of Bath Boutique Stays



Businesses wanting strategic advice can now get Government funding of up to £2,000 to help with half the cost. To find out more, visit greatbusiness.gov.uk/growthvouchers



In search of the women who built Waterloo Bridge

CAMPAIGNERS have launched an appeal to try to find any of the hundreds of women who built Waterloo Bridge during the Second World War.

To mark the 70th anniversary of the bridge opening in 1945 a search has begun to find any remaining of the workforce of mainly women who built it, and to get them the recognition that they have long been denied.

Waterloo Bridge is known as the "Ladies' Bridge" to Thames boatmen, a nickname it was given because it was women who built it.

But all records and photographs of the women who worked on the bridge were lost in the 1970s and now campaigners are hoping to rebuild an archive through the memories of Londoners.

Some 24,000 women joined the construction industry during the war. In memory of their contribution, the Women's Engineering Society is lobbying to have a blue plaque put on Waterloo Bridge.

Although women built it, when Home Secretary Herbert Morrison opened the new bridge in 1945 he neglected to give them the credit.

In his speech, Morrison said: "The men who built Waterloo Bridge are fortunate men. They know that, although their names may be forgotten, their work will be a pride and use to London for many generations to come. The new bridge is a monument to their skill and craftsmanship."

Now the society wants to correct the official line and make the bridge a monument to the women.

A documentary about the building of the bridge, made by film-maker Karen Livesey, will be shown at Somerset House on March 9th; but historians want to expand the story by hearing from any of



■ PATHE news clip of Herbert Morrison opening Waterloo Bridge in 1945 the women builders.

"We need more of the stories to be told to make women's contribution come alive," said Dawn Bonfield, president of the Women's Engineering Society.

To contact the society, email office@wes.org.uk

Singing sessions to expand

A POPULAR singing for health programme that operates across the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is set to expand.

Sing to Live, Live to Sing already runs weekly sessions at the Dalgarno Centre, W10 Chelsea Theatre, SW10 and the Response Community Project, SW5.

The council wants to hear from community groups who work with, or know of, people who could benefit from singing, and existing singing groups to help identify how best to expand the programme.

The council is asking voluntary and community organisations to complete a short survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/rbkc-sing-to-live.

FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

London



WEEKLY News

ISSUE 12

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Thursday, February 26th 2015

Prince Charles teams up with Ant and Dec

Popular duo to present a documentary celebrating 40 years of The Prince's Trust

By Geoff Baker



PROMOTING THE WORK OF THE PRINCE'S TRUST: Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly with Prince Charles

WHEN it comes to helping disadvantaged young people, no politician can hold a candle to him. In 40 years of lending his hand, Prince Charles has put 750,000 youngsters back on their feet.

Through the Prince's Trust, Charles has become a dutch uncle to an army of teenagers in need and now TV is to tell the remarkable story of how the man set to be dubbed "the caring king" changed the face of charity.

For the rest of the year TV cameras will probe inside every aspect of the Trust to reveal how the royal youth-worker has bettered so many lives.

And to front the story of "Uncle Charlie's Army", the Prince of Wales has chosen Britain's most popular chuckle brothers – Ant and Dec.

Historically it's been a Dimbleby or some other such broadcasting heavyweight who has landed the big royal gigs and few stars of light entertainment have had a look-in.

Cheeky chappies

But in choosing the nation's favourite cheeky chappies, Clarence House has shown astute foresight as their ordinary bloke banter will help position Charles where he clearly wants to be – as a man of the people.

"This isn't going to be 'I'm The Monarchy, Get Me Out Of Here'," said an ITV insider.

"But what the documentary will be, largely because of Ant and Dec's knack for gently pricking pomp and bringing everything down to earth, is a moving and illuminating film about how somebody so steeped in such privilege has helped to better lives bolster talent which might otherwise have been wasted.

"The Trust has foster-fathered great successes over 40 years and has hugely humanised the connection between the rulers and the ruled."

The Prince's Trust aims to work with young people from four priority target groups. These are the long-term unemployed, people who have been in trouble with the law, people who are in difficulty at school, and people who have been in care.

LWN
**ROYAL
SPECIAL**

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Prince's Trust

TURN to page 3

THE paper serving ROYAL London

ROYAL LONDON

Film to chart 40 years of Prince's Trust

Supporting young people right across the UK

FROM page 1

Each year the Trust helps around 50,000 young people. The Enterprise Programme is the scheme for which the Trust is best known and it helps young people start a business. The help provided usually consists of a loan of up to £4,000, which needs to be repaid by the young person together with 3 per cent interest. Each year young people pay the Prince's Trust around £360,000 in interest payments on their loans.

More than 75 per cent of Trust-supported businesses are still trading after one year and 59 per cent after two years. Some, like the accountancy software KashFlow started by Londoner Duane Jackson, have become hugely successful.

Duane was in prison when he first heard of the Trust. Although blessed with a brilliant mind, his troubled upbringing had left him living in care, expelled from school and he was talked into drug trafficking. He was caught and served two and a half years.

Support available

While still in prison, Duane attended a seminar given by an ambassador from the Trust, who explained the support available to those who wanted to turn their lives around.

"I knew that with my criminal record no one was going to give me a job, but that talk made me realise I could get help to set up my own business," he said.

In 2003, having presented The Trust with a business plan, Duane was given a £2,500 loan and a £1,500 grant under the Enterprise programme – enough to get him kick-started with a desk, computer and business cards. He launched

KashFlow officially in 2005, and by the time he sold it eight years later, it had 40 employees and 20,000 customers.

He sold his company for £20 million.

Such success against the odds is the sort of story that Ant and Dec will explore for the 90-minute documentary slated for screening early next year to mark the 40th anniversary of the Trust.

Like Alesha Dixon, Chris Evans, Michael McIntyre and Gary Lineker, Ant and Dec are long-term ambassadors for the Trust and in interviews with Prince Charles, other stars and those whom the Trust has helped, they will chart the rise of Britain's most famous enterprise charity.

ITV said: "Ant and Dec will gain a close perspective on The Prince's work as they visit courses and Prince's Trust Centres to get an inside look at the efforts made to help 13 to 30 year olds, many of whom come from a care background, and who deal with a range of challenges, such as homelessness, mental health issues, unemployment, difficulties at school and crime."

Ant and Dec said: "We are hugely excited to be working with The Prince of Wales on our first project of this kind. We've worked with The Prince's Trust for years and know what an incredible job they do of supporting young people right across the UK."

This is a unique opportunity for us to get under the skin of a great organisation and its founder



CELEBRATION: On a visit to Thames College in London at the end of last year Prince Charles was invited to cut a cake to mark the 300th team of the Prince's Trust young people's training and education group

"This is a unique opportunity for us to get under the skin of a great organisation and its founder, to pose the questions we've always wanted to ask and to see the achievements of the young people celebrated."

Through the Trust, Charles has met Ant and Dec often and programme-makers are clearly hoping that the mutual admiration will result in TV magic, endearing the Prince in ways that previous, more-ponderous royal specials have not managed.

Commenting on the TV duo at last year's National Television Award the Prince said: "I have had the great pleasure of meeting them on many occasions over the last fifteen years, as avid and

generous supporters of The Prince's Trust, taking time out from their extremely busy schedules to support and inspire those young people who come to us in disadvantaged and difficult situations.

"As role models, they have led by example, showing a work ethic and a dedication that I know is appreciated by, and encouraging to, the many courageous young men and women who come to my Trust seeking guidance in trying to make a better life for themselves and in turn, in some cases, their families and communities."

With admiration like that, Ant and Dec may get him in jungle yet.

SELL IT NOW, SELL IT LATER

One of the leading UK auctioneers, John Nicholson's, is offering a dual option route to market for all your unwanted possessions. This means that if you have something you want to sell, you have the option of getting paid for it now or putting it into one of their many forthcoming auctions.

John Nicholson's will be visiting many of the towns in the South East over the course of the next few months, including St. Barnabus Church, Dulwich on Monday 2nd March.

With spring just around the corner, it's time to recycle the very last of those unwanted Christmas presents. It's also a great opportunity to clear out the attic, garage and top of your cupboards and wardrobes – and turn your clutter into cash.

You've all seen the Antiques Roadshow. Every week people bring in things that a relative has left them in a will, they have had stored in a cardboard box for years and never thought about or have simply picked up at a car boot sale along with a host of other things. Sometimes they prove to be a real find worth tens of thousands of pounds but, even more often, they turn out to be just a few hundred or a little more. But that's a welcome sum too. What is amazing is just how often people have no idea that these items have any value whatsoever.

One John Nicholson's customer was left stunned when she discovered that 'a pretty vase' which she bought in a junk shop in Maidenhead in the 1960s for £5 collected £18,000 at an Oriental sale held at John Nicholson's last year. Over 18 times the estimated value!

Little did she know that the vase, which she was about to take to the charity shop, was actually an 18th/19th century Chinese Ming-style blue and white porcelain bottle vase, with seal and mark of Qianlong. Our experience at John Nicholson's over the years has taught us that nearly everyone has some sort of hidden gem among their belongings without realising it. It may not be worth a life-changing amount, but realising its value at a time of year when the post-Christmas

blues — and bills — are still with us means it may be worth spending half an hour rummaging through your things just to check."

John Nicholson's are looking for any items, large or small which you can bring along to the venue; either to be valued for any forthcoming auction or to sell on the spot. Of particular interest are any oriental items, jewellery, objets d'art, silver and fine paintings. Don't worry if the item is too large to bring, they will be happy to look at a good photograph and visit you in your home at a later date.

John Nicholson says: "This is a really good time to de-clutter and even better, you could make money on some of those items you haven't used or seen for many years. Many people are amazed at some of the things they considered worthless and which turned out to be worth a fortune."

John Nicholson's Fine Art Auctioneers have been operating for over 30 years in the South East and hold many auctions throughout the year. This year, they will also be holding a vintage car sale in July. You might also have seen them featured on many of the TV programmes, we have come to love, such as Bargain Hunt, Dickenson's Real Deal and Posh Pawn.

The Dulwich visit will be held at St. Barnabus Church, Dulwich SE21 7DG on Monday 2nd March between 10am-4pm.

If you would like any more information regarding the forthcoming venture, please call 01428 653727 or email

sales@johnnicholsonson.com. You can also check out their website on www.johnnicholsonson.com.



A Russian silver and enamel Kovsh, or drinking vessel, with an estimate of £8,000 - £12,000.

WHERE TO SEE YOUR FAVOURITE ROYAL

FULL details of future and recent events in the ever-busy diaries of the many members of The Royal Family are available from the official website www.royal.gov.uk but here's the London schedule for the week ahead for Where To See A Royal.

Tuesday, February 24th

● The Countess of Wessex will attend the Torch Trophy Trust Awards at the Army & Navy Club, Pall Mall W1.

● The Duke of Gloucester, as Grand Prior of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, will hold an investiture at the Priory Church of St John, Clerkenwell EC1, and will open the St John Ambulance National Headquarters, St John's Lane EC1.

● The Duchess of Gloucester, as Honorary Livryman of the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers, will attend a Basketmaking Day at the Royal National Hotel WC1.

Wednesday, February 25th

● The Duke of Edinburgh, as Honorary Life Member of the Royal Aero Club, will hold a lunch for past and present chairmen at Buckingham Palace.

● The Princess Royal, as President of the English-Speaking Union of the Commonwealth, will attend the English Language Awards at Dartmouth House, Charles Street W1.

● The Duke of Gloucester, as Patron of the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust, will attend a lunch at Savills, Margaret Street W1.

● The Duke of Kent will visit the Barkantine Community Nursery at Mellish Street E14.

Thursday, February 26th

● The Duke of Edinburgh, as Patron, will attend receptions at St James's Palace for young people who have achieved the gold standard in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

● The Princess Royal, as Royal Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences, will attend the Spring Meeting for Clinician Scientists at the Royal College of Physicians at St Andrew's Place NW1.

● The Duke of Gloucester, as Vice Royal Patron of the Almshouse Association, will attend a reception at the House of Lords.

Friday, February 27th

● The Duke of Cornwall, as Chancellor of the University of Bath, will hold an alumni reception at St James's Palace.

Tuesday, March 3rd

● The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will host a stay at Buckingham Palace by the President of the United Mexican States.

● The Princess Royal, as Patron of UK Youth, will visit the Microsoft IT Youth Hub.

● The Princess Royal, as Commandant-In-Chief of St John Ambulance, will open the Park Royal Complex NW10.

ROYAL LONDON

Call on behalf of troubled children

Kate campaigns for children's mental health

By Geoff Baker

JUST weeks after meeting disadvantaged families in Kensington to tell them that they had a friend in her, the Duchess of Cambridge has thrown herself into another children's support campaign as she fast becomes the Duchess of Childcare.

Last month Campaigning Kate met one-to-one with parents and children helped by North Kensington's Family Friends project, impressing the royal borough that their neighbour from the other side of the tracks was taking time out to try to help the needier.

Her support for Family Friends follows her commitment to help children of parents with drug and alcohol problems through her charities M-PACT Plus and Action On Addiction and also help children through her Art Room project, which encourages children with low self-esteem to gain confidence through art.

Now she is spearheading another crucial child campaign to help depressed and troubled youngsters after research has shockingly discovered that three children in every London classroom have mental health problems.

Stigmatised

A survey by the children's mental health charity Place2Be has revealed that an alarming number of parents would rather sweep the stigmatised issue of their children's depression under the carpet.

Almost a third of parents of children aged five to 18 said they would feel embarrassed if their child wanted counselling at school, reflecting a long-time tendency for adults to pay little attention to children's mental health.

But as the charity's research has also revealed that depression rates in teenagers have rocketed by 70 per cent in the past 25 years and one third of all 16 to 25-year-olds say they have thought about suicide, child champion Kate has come out fighting for the kids – bluntly telling London parents, “this needs to change!”

In a remarkably-campaigning video posted on her own website, Kate has sent troubled children a strong message that she and Prince William are

on their side.

In the video, she says: “The challenges facing children today can often feel overwhelming. Both William and I have seen that many young people are struggling to cope with the impact of bullying, bereavement, domestic violence, family breakdown and more.

“Without support, the effects of these challenges can be traumatic, leading to serious issues such as anxiety, depression, addiction and self-harm.

“The stigma around mental health means that many children do not get the help that they so badly need.

“This needs to change! We need to help young people and their parents understand that it is not a sign of weakness to ask for help.

“A child's mental health is just as important as their physical health and deserves the same quality of support. No one would feel embarrassed about seeking help for a child if they broke their arm and we really should be equally ready to support a child coping with emotional difficulties.

“William and I sincerely believe that early action can prevent problems in childhood from turning into larger ones later in life. That is why we are both supporting Place2Be and children's mental health, and I hope you will join us.

“Together with open conversations and greater understanding, we can ensure that attitudes towards mental health change, and children receive the support they deserve.”

Although it is highly unusual for a member of the Royal Family to insist that other families change their ways, the Duchess's intervention is being welcomed in all corners as her huge popularity means that many will heed her call on behalf of troubled children.

“We're very grateful to have the support of the Duchess of Cambridge for this important campaign,” said Place2Be chief Catherine Roche.

“By her raising awareness of the benefits of getting early support for mental health issues, we hope to change attitudes and help reduce the risk of complex and more serious problems when those children reach adulthood.”

To learn more about ways to help troubled children, go to www.dukeandduchessofcambridge.org or www.place2be.org



■ CAMPAIGNING VIDEO: The Duchess of Cambridge asking for a change in attitudes to children's mental health problems on her own website



■ CHILDREN'S CHAMPION: The Duchess visiting the Family Friends group in Kensington last month

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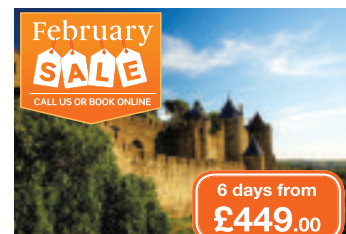
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SHOWBIZ SPECIAL*Arthur & George is brought to the small screen*

A change of pace for 'Doc Martin'

by Geoff Baker

ITV is preparing to carve a screen change for 'Doc Martin' star Martin Clunes, turning him dark and serious, and he says the prospect frightens him.

Next month the TV GP will be reincarnated as Sherlock Holmes' creator Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in a three-part adaptation of Julian Barnes' acclaimed novel, 'Arthur & George'.

If the drama is the ratings hit that it is tipped to be, ITV will make more series about Conan Doyle's own detective work and create a whole new image for the actor still best-celebrated for championing blokes in 'Men Behaving Badly'.

Most actors would be jumping for joy, but Martin admits that playing a serious role for a change from seven series of 'Doc Martin' is intimidating.

"I was quite terrified by the thought of taking this on," he says.

"It's outside of my comfort zone. My comfort zone has been Doc Martin or documentaries about animals. That has been my life for so long, with little bits of acting along the way but never in the title role.

"But this is completely different, it is actually quite big – and as he is a very famous Scotsman, I had to learn to speak with an authentic accent as well."

He was coaxed into the part by his wife, producer Philippa Braithwaite.

"Philippa spent a great deal of time optioning the book and doing deals with agents, writers and ITV.

"Arthur and George is a hugely successful book, and Julian Barnes didn't need us to make a television programme of it, but Philippa very patiently and persistently pursued the idea. She swears there was no pressure, but there was pressure.

"I am sure if somebody else had said: 'why don't you do this' I would have said: 'I'm a bit scared.'"

Miscarriage of justice

The drama is based on true events in which Conan Doyle pursued a notorious miscarriage of justice. Set in 1906 it follows Conan Doyle and his real-life Watson, his trusted secretary Alfred 'Woodie' Wood, as they investigate the case of George Edalji, a young Anglo-Indian solicitor who was imprisoned for allegedly mutilating animals – a case which became known as the Great Wyrley Rippings.

On his release from Pentonville Prison after serving three years, Edalji was desperate to clear his name so he could return to his career.

"The TV drama begins after the tragic death of Conan Doyle's wife, Louisa. He is overwhelmed with grief, and unable to even find refuge in his writing. It is only when Woodie presents him with an apparent real-life miscarriage of justice to try and solve, that he can be roused to action; to use his own skills of detection to rival those of his fictional creation," said an ITV spokeswoman.

"On learning of George Edalji's plight and reading the headlines concerning the Great Wyrley Rippings, Conan Doyle urges Woodie to arrange a meeting with George.

"Arthur believes in George's innocence, and suspects that he was, in fact, a victim of racial discrimination and police corruption.



■ CLUNES is joined by Charles Edwards as his real-life Watson - his trusted secretary Alfred 'Woodie' Wood



■ MARTIN Clunes as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in Arthur & George and, inset, the Sherlock Holmes author himself

Actor Martin Clunes confesses that taking on the dark role of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is way beyond his comfort zone

"By getting involved in the case, Arthur has unleashed an old fury that is not yet sated. It is only by finding the true culprit, that Arthur can finally put the case, and his grief, to rest; whilst simultaneously becoming part of a case that proved singularly significant in English judicial history."

"Arthur & George" also features Conan Doyle's relationship with Jean Leckie, a much younger woman, with whom he enjoyed a long, platonic, relationship whilst his wife was alive. Jean eventually became his second wife.

"At the time we find him in the story his wife has been dying of consumption for about nine years. They have all known it was going to come," said Martin.

"She dies right at the beginning of our story, which puts him in a strange place because he had been seeing Jean Leckie - you couldn't say he had been having an affair because we are pretty certain it hadn't been consummated. His relationship with Jean was quite openly known about, even his wife knew, and the whole family knew too.

"They all gave the friendship their blessing. But when his wife died he went into a spiral of guilt and became fed up with his own invention, Sherlock Holmes.

"He couldn't get his other books published, couldn't get people interested in them and they weren't shifting. Then in his mail one morning, in this strange state, he gets a letter from George Edalji with press cuttings telling the story of how he had been wrongfully imprisoned for these ghastly crimes against livestock.

"It triggers something in his imagination, and he gets fired up, and tries to use Sherlock Holmes' forensic methods to solve the case.

"It is kind of frustrating for him, because it is the real world, it is not fiction, and he can't write what is going to happen, so things come and trip him up and surprise him.

"I think he's seized on this case as a distraction and something to occupy his mind. I think when

you are very, very sad and you have nothing to do, it makes you sadder.

"I think he becomes aware of that so he throws himself wholeheartedly into this, with great energy, and quite single-mindedly. That does seem to nourish him as the story unfolds, even though it doesn't necessarily go as he'd like it to go, it is still the whole act of doing it which invigorates him.

"What I love about the story is he had this tortured seven-year relationship. Then when Sir Arthur's wife died he went on this massive guilt trip. Working on this case sort of allowed him to marry Jean Leckie, and they did live happily ever after. Then they had three children. It was a tremendous love, and I like that. It could have fallen by the wayside, but it didn't."

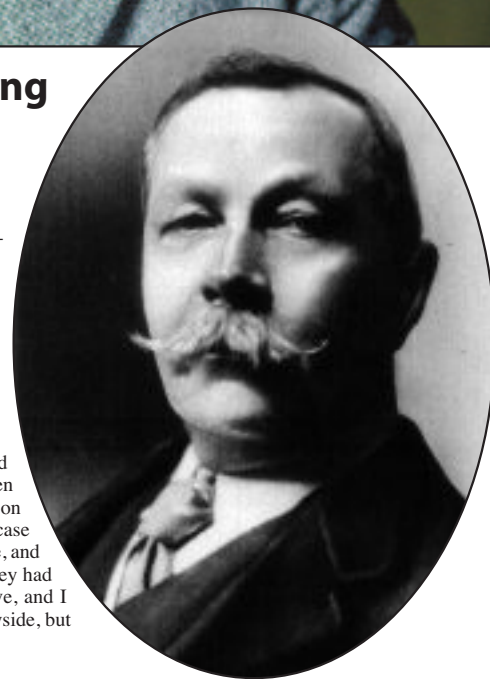
Quite a dandy

"I'm full of admiration for Sir Arthur, I like his application. I like his sense of empowerment, his confidence and the fact he wasn't born to enormous wealth. And in all the photographs of him he is quite a dandy. Les Lansdowne, our costume designer, noticed that other gentlemen of the age would have just one watch chain, but Sir Arthur had two, just like the King.

"But also I discovered that he could be quite bombastic, confident to the point possibly of arrogance, but not insensitive and definitely intelligent, and quite a Toad of Toad Hall. He was a man of adventure and hungry for experience. His wealth allowed him to investigate."

Although daunted by the demands of the role, which meant that he needed a dialect coach on the set so that he could work on the accent during breaks in filming, Martin was encouraged by having his own dog join the team to play Conan Doyle's pet.

Jack Henry, the actor's five-year-old Jack Rus-



sell after which the baby in "Doc Martin" is named, apparently loved the part.

"He was very good. There never had to be a second take because Jim had wandered off. I had been teaching him various commands with a Scottish accent because I needed him to be obedient around sheep, and I was surprised at how attentive he was."

After playing Doc Martin since 2004, Martin says he would be more than happy to bring more Conan Doyle stories to the screen.

"Historically this wasn't the only investigation Sir Arthur Conan Doyle became involved in. If people enjoy watching this and ITV are happy with that, then I am sure we could adapt some more of those cases."

Martin is currently working on a new documentary for ITV which looks at man's working relationship with animals around the world. Then he returns to the picturesque Cornish village of Port Isaac for a new series of "Doc Martin" at the end of March.

Can you provide a child with a safe space?



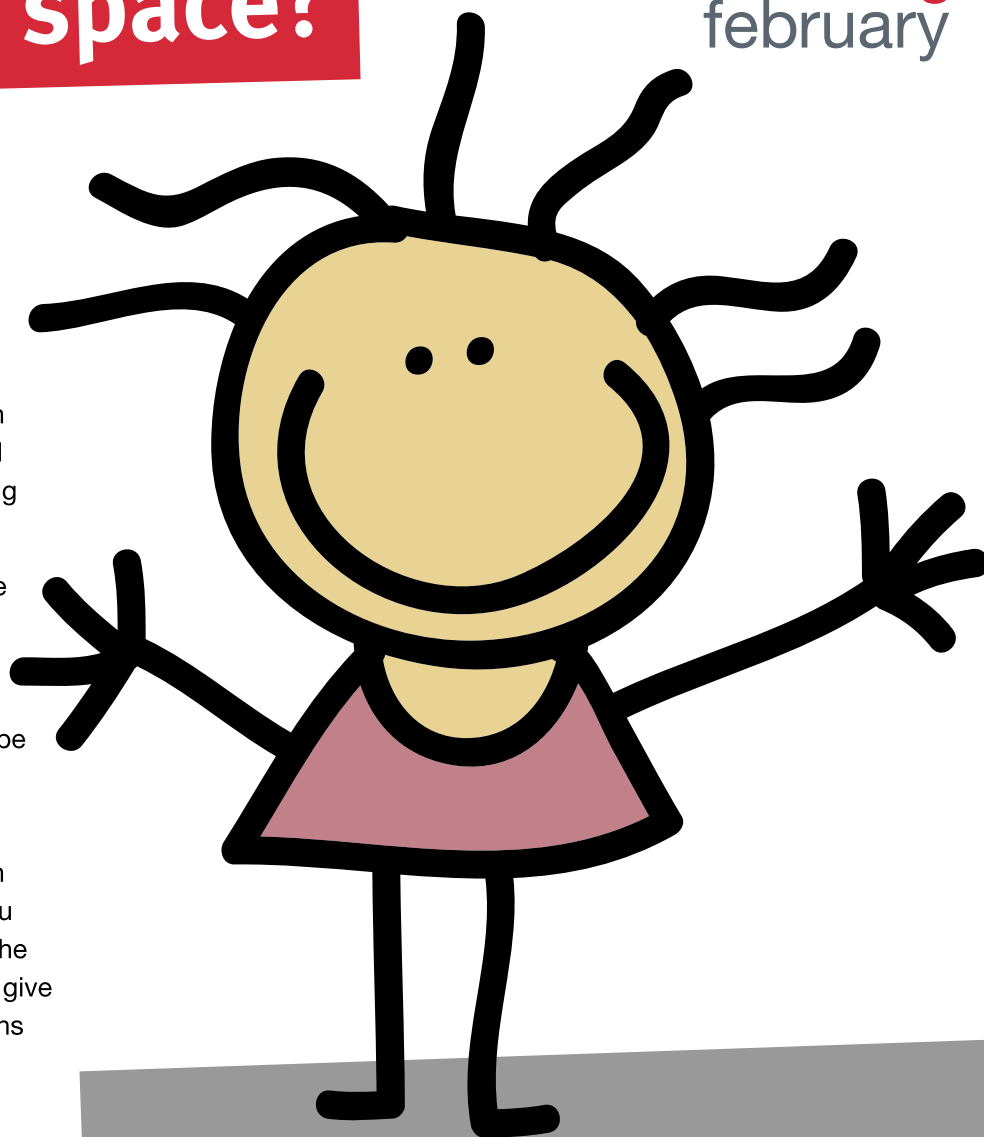
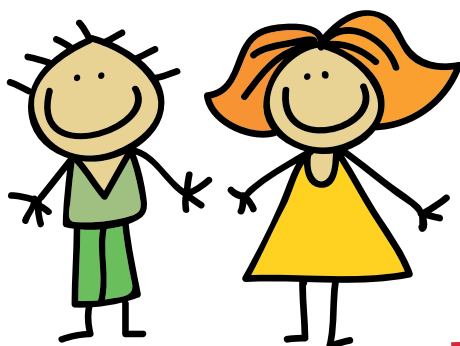
Take that first step on a path to help a youngster find theirs.

Did you know there are over 93,000 children and young people looked after in the United Kingdom, with some 67,000 living with loving foster families?

Fostering February is a campaign to create awareness about what fostering is and dispel many myths that surround fostering. You don't need to own your own home and you don't need to be married. You can be gay, single, or divorced. You can still foster.

Fostering February will help you learn more about the facts and be properly informed on how to become a foster carer. It will help you understand what is involved and how long the process could take. Most importantly, it will give you the opportunity to ask as many questions as you like.

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WINE & DINE

The food and
drink page for
West London

Easy Freezy with Shelina

MASTERCHEF judges John Torode and Gregg Wallace aren't known for getting emotional on screen (unless the latter is enthusing about a buttery biscuit base). But 2012 contestant Shelina Permalloo's Mauritian-inspired cooking left the firm but fair pair all a-flutter.

First, there was Torode, who welled up after tasting Permalloo's exotic deep-fried soft shell crab.

"He had tears in his eyes; I think he said he'd come home," former charity worker Permalloo recalls. "It was one of those turnaround moments, when I realised you shouldn't fake what it is that you love, and if you love what you cook, other people love it too."

Then there was former greengrocer Wallace, who described Permalloo's cooking as "sunshine on a plate".

"When I discovered he loved mangoes nearly as much as me, I shoved mangoes in everything," she says.

Born in Southampton to Mauritian parents but now based in Tooting, Permalloo has been busy with two cookbooks, restaurant work and foodie roadshows since her MasterChef triumph.

Her latest project is the Love Your Freezer campaign with Sainsbury's, which aims to inspire families to get the most from their freezers.

"Frozen food doesn't have to be the breadcrumb, heavy things that people typically think of. It can be light, fresh, and perfect for winter as well," says Permalloo.

"I think freezers have had a bad rep for a long time, and the most important thing about using your freezer is making the most of it - making things colourful, fresh and full of flavour."

The 31-year-old does admit to having found a few random ingredients in the "abyss of the freezer" from time to time - including an exploded bag of frozen thyme.

"It happens to the best of us," she says. "Organising your freezer's really important, labelling it properly and cycling it the way you would with your fridge."

Much of Permalloo's cuisine is inspired by her mother, Sheila, with whom she recently enjoyed a trip to Mauritius.

So who's the better cook these days? "My mum's food is what I crave whenever I've been away or I'm feeling low, or I've got a cold. Technically, I've got more skills than her, but she's definitely the better cook," Permalloo says.

"Mum loves my food, she's really supportive. She's all about taste and smell - an old school cook, no measurements, just feeling as she goes along. I think that's the best way to cook."

Permalloo, aunt to four nephews, who range in age from one to nine, says: "All the kids love getting involved in food, they get really excited. If they can be involved in the process, they want to eat it," she says.

"Kiran, who's seven, is a little foodie. I can definitely imagine him being the next judge on MasterChef - he's very, very shrewd with his words."

Permalloo admits it's been "an incredible couple of years" since she picked up her MasterChef trophy.



■ 2012 Masterchef winner Shelina Permalloo.
Inset her recipe for Bejewelled Rice with Prawns

However, even though some "really great experiences" have come her way, "don't ever forget where you came from", she adds.

"Being close to the family for me is what food was always about. I can't live without them at all."

Here is one of Permalloo's recipes to take you from freezer to fork.

BEJEWELLED RICE WITH PRAWNS

(Serves 4)
6tbsp olive oil
6 cardamom pods
2 bay leaves
1 cinnamon stick
200g basmati rice, rinsed and drained



400ml chicken stock or vegetable stock
4tbsp pomegranate seeds
225g frozen prawns (thoroughly defrosted)
Small pinch of saffron
2tsp cumin seeds
100g toasted flaked almonds
150g frozen chopped onions
Pinch of salt
Green salad, to serve

On a medium heat, fry off all of the spices (cardamom pods, bay leaves, cinnamon stick) in one tablespoon of oil for approximately two minutes, and then add the rice and toast (cook in the frying pan) for a further two minutes.

Add the stock and bring the mixture to a boil before covering it with a tight fitting lid, and then turn the heat down to a low simmer to cook for 10 minutes.

Stir in the pomegranate seeds and the defrosted prawns and cook for a further five minutes.

Add the saffron to a small splash of boiling water and scatter it on top of the cooking mixture. Cover the pot again, turn off the heat and let it sit for five minutes.

Meanwhile, over a medium heat, fry the cumin seeds with the frozen onions and a pinch of salt in the remaining oil until they turn golden. Add the almonds to this mixture then turn off the heat.

To serve, carefully toss the onion mixture into the rice and serve alongside a green salad.



MARK HIX'S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

RICOTTA WITH SPICED RHUBARB

Serves 4

This is a dead-simple dessert to execute for a dinner party with no complicated cooking techniques. Try to buy the best-quality ricotta possible, as there are some cheap rogue ones on the market - it would be a shame to ruin this lovely dessert.

250-300g rhubarb, trimmed
150g granulated sugar
2tbsp ginger liqueur or a couple of good pinches of ground ginger
A good pinch of dried chilli flakes
2tsp grenadine
250-300g good-quality ricotta at room temperature

Cut the rhubarb into 3cm x ½cm-thick batons or into 1cm chunks. Put the sugar, ginger, chilli and grenadine into a saucepan with 200ml water, bring to the boil and simmer for a few minutes until it's reduced by one-third.

Stir in the rhubarb, cover and leave to sit off the heat until the rhubarb is just cooked.

If the heat of the syrup hasn't cooked the rhubarb, pop it back on the heat for 30 seconds or so, then leave to cool. If the syrup isn't thick enough, remove the rhubarb and simmer the syrup until it thickens, then leave to cool and mix back with the rhubarb.

To serve, just spoon the ricotta on to serving plates and spoon the rhubarb and syrup around.



WIN LUNCH AT HIXTER

If you would like to be in with a chance of winning lunch for two at Hixter City or Bankside just answer this simple question:

● What year did Shelina Permalloo win MasterChef?

Email your answer to
competitions@londonweeklynews.co.uk
by Friday March 13th 2015 and include your name and telephone number. The winner will be notified by email or telephone.

Normal competition rules apply

Marking 200 years since the Battle of Waterloo

THE Duke of Wellington's handwritten orders from the Battle of Waterloo, his battle sword, and a pair of original 'Wellington Boots' are among the objects that will go on display in two new exhibitions this year at the two central London properties associated with the battle and its victorious commander – Wellington Arch and Apsley House.

On June 18th, 1815, in a terrible confrontation in present-day Belgium, the first Duke of Wellington commanded an allied army which, aided by the Prussian forces of Marshal Blücher, finally defeated the French Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte. The victory ended over 20 years of conflict in Europe and the wider world.

Opening on Saturday, April 18th 2015 and to mark the Waterloo bicentenary, the two exhibitions at Apsley House and Wellington Arch will together explore the life of the Iron Duke and one of the most important battles in English and European history.

The 9th Duke of Wellington, who still lives at Apsley House, said: "In the year of the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo I am so pleased that both Apsley House and The Wellington Arch will be hosting special exhibitions.

"We will be honouring and commemorating one of the most important battles in European History; the principle legacy of the battle was the long period of peace in Western Europe."

English Heritage's Josephine Oxley, Keeper of the Wellington Collection at Apsley House and Wellington Arch, said: "We've brought together a fascinating collection of surviving objects from the 19th century's most important battle, the 'Great War' of its age. Wellington Arch, the monument to the Duke and his famous victory, is the perfect venue in which to tell the story of Waterloo and explore its significance and its legacy.

"At Apsley House, we'll look at the man behind the battle, what drove him and how Waterloo transformed him, both in public and in private. And 200 years after Waterloo, we'll also reveal the scale of the banquets Wellington held every year to mark the early anniversaries of the battle."

Bernard Cornwell, author of 'Waterloo: The History of Four Days, Three Armies and Three Battles' and the Sharpe historical novels set during the Napoleonic Wars, said: "The importance of Waterloo is that it brought to an end 75 years of rivalry between Britain and France, and marked the beginning of the 'British century'. It is a punctuation mark in history, and punctuation marks are vital moments.

"For me, as a storyteller, Waterloo is also the most magnificent and compelling story; a story of horror and bravery."

Built in 1825-27, Wellington Arch at Hyde Park Corner was intended as a proclamation of Wellington's victories over Napoleon. The Arch is surmounted by the largest bronze sculpture in Europe, depicting the angel of peace descending on the four-horsed chariot of war.

A new exhibition at Wellington Arch: Waterloo 1815 - The Battle for Peace, will give an overview of the battle, the reasons for it, the people involved in it, and its legacy. Items on display include the sword the Duke of Wellington carried at Waterloo, his handwritten battle orders on scraps of vellum, and an original pair of 'Wellington boots'. The leather boots that Wellington had custom-made for campaigning were much admired and imitated: adapted over the years to new materials, they still remain popular today.

Apsley House stands opposite the Wellington Arch – still home to the Dukes of Wellington today. Apsley House has changed comparatively little since the first Duke lived there. The house was enlarged in 1828 while Wellington was Prime Minister by the architect Benjamin Dean Wyatt.

In 2015 the Waterloo Gallery – where Wellington held the annual Waterloo Banquets to commemorate the great victory – will be re-presented. A copy of the only surviving menu plan from the annual banquets will go on display and the magnificent Portuguese silver gilt centrepiece and dinner service will be returned to the Gallery, taking its place on a formal banqueting table. The service was commissioned by the Portuguese Council of Regency in 1816 to honour Wellington's role in liberating Portugal.

Elsewhere in the house, a new exhibition will open with a host of Wellington and Waterloo memorabilia and visitors to Apsley House will be able to explore the collection via four new multimedia tours.

Outside of London, Walmer Castle in Kent – where the Duke of Wellington spent part of each year in his role as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and where he died in 1852 – will be redisplayed in 2015 to shed light on the Duke and on the other fascinating figures from the castle's history. New displays will chart Wellington's career, the story of his time spent at Walmer, his death there, and the iconic 'celebrity' status he attained during and after his life.



■ ARTHUR Wellesley, First Duke of Wellington portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence



BATTLE of Waterloo re-enactors, left, and above under the Wellington Arch. The photo below show the Arch lit up with the angel of peace bronze sculpture on top and Apsley House in the background





TALK OF THE TOWN

MUSIC ★ THEATRE ★ PUBS

*The entertainment scene
in West London*

Brit Awards or 'Rock Stars Behaving Badly'?

THERE is a clip on YouTube called "Don't Mess With Keith Richards" which pretty much sums up both the perils and the entertainment factor of performing rock and roll live on television. The short bit of film shows The Rolling Stones performing "Satisfaction" at the Hampton Coliseum in Virginia in 1981. Mick Jagger has barely finished the first verse of the song when Keith spots a fan running across the stage and straight for Mick.

In a lightning move, Keith unstraps his guitar, holds it by the neck and swings it at the stage intruder, decking him in one blow. He then puts on his guitar again and continues playing the song.

To date, the clip has been watched more than 5,300,000 times. The many comments posted below it are best summed up by one, "this just made my day".

Whilst taking onboard that the incident happened within a year of the murder of John Lennon, making Keith's self-defence understandable, this is how we like our rock stars to behave - badly.

And that is part of the reason why so many millions will tune in to watch The Brits on ITV this week, because the annual rock and pop awards are screened live and anything could happen, hopefully.

Although The Brits are meant to be a celebration of all that is best about British music, it's not to see whether Ed Sheeran wins Best Red-head that pulls in the viewers. We watch in the hope that this year will provide another classic Brit Moment.

A few years ago the music industry cleaned up its coverage of The Brits and instead of us seeing stars and their entourages at booze-piled tables falling either over or out of their frocks we were confronted by pictures of them all sitting up straight in theatre seats looking rather dull. Many switched off as it was evident that not much vicarious fun was to be had here.

But for this year's Brit Awards the stars' tables are back and the anticipation is high that the consequence of artists sitting at them drinking for hours as they wait for their name to be called may lead to some good old monkey business.

We've not had a good Brits Moment for years. Yes, last year The Arc-

By Geoff Baker

tic Monkeys' Alex Turner did deliberately drop a microphone onstage after a chippy speech, with the braggadocio taunt "you can bill me for that if you like", but that's hardly up there with Keith Richards is it, a rock star worth a reported £11 million offering to pay for a £30 piece of kit?

Back at the 2009 Brits things appeared to be looking up a bit when the word went around backstage that Girls Aloud "would be performing naked". But any expectation of an "oo-err" moment was soon killed stone dead when the Girls appeared hidden behind five-foot feather boas and clearly clad in body stockings.

There was the occasion in 2000 when the dance DJ Brandon Block came onstage in an advanced state of intoxication to interrupt Ronnie Wood's presentation of the Best Sound-track award, got into a bit of a slanging match with Ronnie and had to be hauled offstage by security after the Stones guitarist threw a glass of water in his face. That was quite fun, but again, not quite the same as getting felled by Keef's Telecaster.

The 2000 Brits was also the time when Robbie Williams had a good few of the crowd chanting "fight fight fight" when, after winning the award for best single, Robbie challenged Liam Gallagher to a televised boxing match.

"So, anybody like to see me fight Liam?" said Robbie in reply to Liam's brother Noel calling him "the fat dancer from Take That".



**SHOCK
APPEAL: Will
Madonna have
a point to
prove?**

Robbie taunted: "Liam, a hundred grand of your money and a hundred grand of my money. We'll get in a ring we'll have a fight and you can all watch it on TV, what do you think about that?"

But as Liam was not in the country at the time, let alone in the room, nothing came of it.

No, for a good bit of ruck and roll we need to go way back to the Nineties when Brits really knew how to behave like brats.

In 1998 there was the almost-amusing occasion when the ludicrously-named Danbert Nobacon of Chumbawamba threw some ice over cabinet minister John

Prescott with the excuse, "if he has the nerve to turn up at the Brit

Awards in a vain attempt to make Labour seem cool and trendy then he deserve all we can throw at him".

All very right-on and that, but ice? It's not exactly a chair and this from an industry where, in the Sixties, a certain band's manager used to hang critics by their ankles outside the windows of office blocks for writing a bad review.

In fact, it's been almost 20 years since

● **CONTINUED on page 21**

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TALK OF THE TOWN ★ *The entertainment scene in West London*

Queen of the West End is the new Top Cat

West End star Kerry Ellis has taken over the role of Grizabella in Andrew Lloyd Webber's revival of *Cats* at the London Palladium. Since opening in December the role has been played by the much celebrated Nicole Schirzinger who, will be releasing the show's most famous song, *Memory* as a single. With plans for a Broadway transfer, *Cats* is once again the show everyone wants to see.

HAVING emerged as one of the most talented musical stars, Kerry Ellis has played many of the biggest roles in musical theatre, but most famously the green witch, Elphaba, in the smash hit *Wicked*.

Kerry was Britain's first Green witch and also played the role on Broadway. After a successful solo album and tour, she returned to *Wicked* last summer for another three month run.

I caught up with Kerry during her first week as Grizabella, and she said: "It was all a bit crazy going in obviously. It's not very long and I'm going into an existing company. Taking over from Nicole and going into such an iconic show and singing such an iconic song, it's been a bit crazy but I have loved it. It's an amazing company, an amazing show and people love it, they really do."

This isn't the first big takeover role Kerry has fulfilled, having previously followed Idina Menzel into *Wicked*. I asked about how it was filling some difficult shoes (or paws!).

"I did actually go and see her Nicole do the show when she opened and she was fabulous."

Big song

I asked Kerry how she had prepared her big song, *Memory*, and if it was her first time performing it.

"I've sung it a couple of times in different concerts but not the way it's done in the show. I've never really got the meaning, as such, behind it."

"I was really fortunate that Trevor Nunn came in and Gillian Lynne obviously, and Chrissie Cartwright. I got to work with all of them and get all of their information and the stories behind the song which was so important."

"So many people have sung it and people know it, but to do it in the show with all the right intention is a completely different ball game and I feel as if I've almost rediscovered it. There does come a lot of pressure with singing something like that, and it comes right at the end of the show so you have to keep that energy and excitement up right until the end. I feel very honoured and grateful to be doing it."

The original production of *Cats* played at The New London Theatre from 1981-2002. Kerry watched the production twice as a teenager.

"I remember going with school and I also went when I was at college. It was the big dance show that everyone at theatre college went to. I remember lov-

ing it and it being a real experience. It isn't like any other show."

"In what other show do people dress up as cats and dance and sing songs? It just doesn't happen. It was very unusual and it's still very unusual even though it's nearly 30 years on."

I asked Kerry to choose which other role in the show she would love to play.

"I would love to be the White Cat. She does this incredible dance solo and she's just magical. The part is quite poignant. It's so far removed from anything I could ever do. Physically I couldn't do anything like that so that's magical to me."

"There are some great



By NICKY SWEETLAND
LWN Theatre Critic



Being green

I asked if Kerry missed being green.

"No!" she laughed. "As much as I loved it, because I did love that transformation, I don't miss getting the green off at all."

With a very large and loyal fan base, many of Kerry's fans dress up when they visit the shows.

"I've had some amazing support over the years, I really have and my fan base is incredible. They're loyal and they're gracious and they're polite and they're just wonderful. I couldn't really ask for more."

"You do an opening night like on Monday when you're going into a new show and you see a lot of familiar faces and you know you're going to get that support. It's like

having a theatre full of your family because you know you've got that warmth there."

"Because I've been in quite eccentric shows I do get people coming dressed in the gear but I think that's great. In *Cats* now they do face painting at the front so you do see people with their faces painted at the stage door. I think it's all brilliant."

"Going to the theatre is an experience and the more you can get out of that the experience the better."

Kerry has an 18-month old son and I ask when he will first see his mum perform.

"He's actually been around it a lot. I worked while I was pregnant and then Brian (May) and I went on tour a couple of months after I'd had Alfie. He came to Russia, all over the UK, France and Italy. He was with me the whole time which was lovely so he's been around theatres and arenas and music since he was in the womb."

"I took him on tour in Rent so he's been around people in costume. I took him to *Wicked* so he saw me when I was green and went on the set, so he's not phased at all by it."

The film *Groundhog Day*, currently being made into a musical by Tim Minchin, famously involves the lead character, played by Bill Murray being woken up by the same song everyday. I ask Kerry what she would choose for her *Groundhog Day* song.

"My best thing is waking up in the morning and going in to see my son. He just has the biggest smile on his face every morning. It just reminds me of Pharrell Williams' 'Happy'. I sang it on my tour and it's one of those songs that just perks you up straight away."

Kerry tries to get to as much theatre as is possible - what would she give as a recommendation to see in the West End?

"I know that *Miss Saigon* would be a fantastic show with a brilliant cast, so I think that would be a winner. A big favorite of mine is still *War Horse*. There are so many. *Wicked* is obviously phenomenal but come and see *Cats*. If you can get a ticket then come and see *Cats*!"

● Kerry Ellis, pictured, is performing as Grizabella in *Cats* at the London Palladium until April 22nd

A new mouser ... and she's purrfect

ONE of the first West End shows I saw as a teenager was *Cats*.

Now revived at The London Palladium it offers a very different theatre experience and I was really looking forward to seeing the changes the producers had made to this classic hit musical.

The original production of *Cats* ran at The New London Theatre from 1981-2002, playing a total of 8,949 performances.

The '80s team have been reunited to bring this revival to life with Trevor Nunn, Gillian Lynne and Chrissie Cartwright all working with the new cast to bring Andrew Lloyd Webber's new production to life.

Opening in December 2014 with the role of Grizabella being played by Nicole Scherzinger, the show has enjoyed rave reviews and full houses. But I wanted to see the new leading lady who had taken over the role in the previous week.

Dubbed the Queen of the West End, Kerry Ellis is a big star in musical theatre circles. This is a difficult role to take over, with Scherzinger releasing the show's most famous song 'Memory' as a single and Lloyd Webber dubbing it 'the best recording of my music ever done'.

Filling big shoes is something that Ellis is not daunted by however, having previously followed Broadway and Disney star Idina Menzel into *Wicked*.

Last week Ellis won a coveted 'What's On Stage' award for reprising the role of Elphaba in the summer for a three month run in *Wicked* at the Apollo Victoria.

Although taking to the stage with the ensemble in the opening number, Ellis doesn't appear as Grizabella until half way through Act 1.

When she does, the stage is set alight with her fabulous charisma and presence. Vocally Ellis is beyond reproach and her wonderfully subtle characterisation leaves you feeling as if you have experienced something very special.

The rest of the ensemble of *Cats* is truly majestic. With astounding choreography, so akin to the felines they are portraying they use the auditorium to engage the audience further.

There is an effortlessness to their movements even when asked to perform some complex acrobatic sequences. At times it was like watching children play with beautiful and simple and innocence.

Although there have been changes from the original production, most noticeably the much-needed updating of *Rum Tum Tugger*, the producers have managed to keep the charm and appeal of this wonderfully performed musical masterpiece.

● CONTINUED from page 20

The Brits last divided the nation between those who were appalled and those who applauded and that was when Pulp's Jarvis Cocker ran onstage during Michael Jackson's performance with a choir of children to moon his backside at the "Artist of a Generation", in protest against the artist's liking for hanging out rather avidly with the young generation.

Jarvis was lifted by the police for that, bizarrely on suspicion of assault, and although he was released uncharged it did lead to Noel Gallagher saying Jarvis should be given the MBE for services to the music industry.

It is difficult to spot the likely trouble-makers among this year's nominees. Neither Ed Sheeran nor One Direction strike you as much of an ice-chucker and Sam Smith and Taylor Swift seem too sweet to be any great threat to health and safety.

Perhaps more interesting will be if the TV cameras are turned on the Brits "Backstage Spa", where the alleged enfant terribles can "access the exclusive spa for hair and tanning treatments, skincare, make-up and express nail manicures" so that "all the celebrities taking part in the show can be con-

fident of their red carpet-ready looks".

Hmmm, very rock and roll. After you with the VO5, Keith.

But before we despair of facing a vanilla night in, The Brits have an ace up their sleeve who should guarantee watching right to the end - headlining the evening and making her first appearance at the awards for 20 years will be the Minx Queen Incarnate, Madonna.

Hot from her own mooning moment at the recent Grammy Awards, Madonna must be none-too-happy about last week's news that Radio 1 has dropped her from their playlist because, at 56, she is considered by the BBC's young hip cats to be "irrelevant and old".

Goaded by a swipe like that, the odds are that the First Lady of Shock will make quite a display to prove that she's not an immaterial girl, and as the Brits chairman Max Lousada is promising that "having her as part of the show will guarantee an unforgettable night", some of us will certainly be hoping so.

The Brit Awards. Wednesday February 25th ITV 8pm

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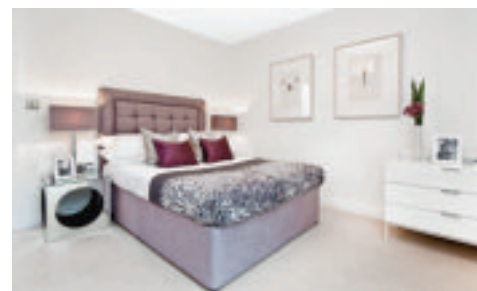
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LONDON WEEKLY NEWS

sport

'Idiotic' Barton sees red again

AS if Chris Ramsey didn't already have a big enough task on his hands trying to preserve QPR's Premier League status, the new head coach has become the latest in a long line of managers having to contend with that human ticking time-bomb known as Joey Barton.

He will have to do without his skipper for the next three matches – London derbies against Arsenal, Spurs and Crystal Palace – following his latest 'red mist' moment.

Already on a Premier League record run of seven yellow cards, Barton was sent-off by referee Anthony Taylor in the 32nd minute of R's 2-1 defeat at Hull City on Saturday.

Barton initially looked like he was acting as peacemaker after a foul by QPR debutant Darnell Furlong on Nikica Jelavic – who had given Hull a 16th minute lead –

sparked a gathering of players from both teams.

But after pushing Alex Bruce in the chest, a poke aimed at the groin of Tom Huddlestone saw him dismissed for the ninth time in his career. At 32, you might have thought the highly combustible Scouser had learned his lesson by now but the penny still hasn't dropped.

Even without their experienced midfielder, QPR managed to equalise before half-time thanks to a Charlie Austin header and, given the circumstances, a draw would have been a very acceptable result against fellow strugglers.

Disadvantage

But their numerical disadvantage for 58 minutes ultimately proved costly. Just moments after Robert Green made a superb instinctive save to deny Dame N'Doye, the keeper was grasping at thin air as the same striker headed Hull's 89th minute winner.

The result leaves R's one place above the drop zone on goal difference.

As ever, Barton leaves his manager, employers



LOFTUS ROAD RANGERS REVIEW

With Tony McDonald

and supporters scratching their heads and again asking 'why?' With fellow midfielder Leroy Fer still nursing a hamstring injury, his absence comes as another blow to QPR's survival hopes.

He is not unintelligent but appears incapable of controlling himself when provoked.

Giving Barton the added responsibility of captaincy should instil in him greater responsibility for his actions but events at the KC Stadium suggest he remains an expensive liability. There was nothing violent or dangerous at all in what he did to Bruce and Huddlestone, and 20 years ago the ref would have told all the players to just 'get on with it'.

But under today's rules, where every push and shove seems to bring a card, it was needlessly foolish – or 'idiotic', as Barton himself admitted in an interview after the game.

In fairness to him, Barton took to Twitter on Saturday night to issue his frank apologies. In five tweets he said: "Young kid making his debut has made a good tackle. Couple of Hull players trying to get him sent off. My job as captain is to protect him. 'I've tried to prevent Hull's players influencing referee as you can see by me pushing Bruce away. 'My actions towards

Huddlestone were certainly not malicious, it was a stupid reaction to being barged but I can appreciate it wasn't right. 'I'm gutted I got sent off. I've let my teammates down today and being someone who puts the team above everything else, I'm gutted about that.

Apologised

"I've apologised to the lads and would like to apologise to all QPR fans who travelled today."

It would be wrong, though, to lay the blame for the defeat at Hull entirely at Barton's door. For instance, Steven Caulker's poor headed clearance fell invitingly at the feet of Jelavic for Hull's first goal.

You have to feel sorry for Ramsey, who said: "I'm so disappointed. I feel sorry for the players really, because they gave absolutely everything. 'We can't let it crush us because there's so much still to play for.

"There were a lot of good performances but a small lapse in concentration has really cost us.



Steven Caulker's mistake led to Hull's first goal. Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

"We always talk about stopping crosses in training and I felt we let two crosses get across the box far too easily.

"We allowed them to play quality, rather than hopeful, crosses in to the box and it hurt us."

Ramsey deserves credit for continuing to lay new foundations for the future by giving a senior debut to right-back Darnell Furlong, the 19-year-old son of former QPR striker and now under-18s coach Paul Furlong.

Darnell said: "Chris told me I could do a job and that gave me confidence. I thought I did OK. It was a great experience but the result was a sickener.

"It's just about learning and taking everything on board."

The squad has spent this week in Dubai for warm-weather training ahead of next Wednesday's tough home league game against in-form Arsenal.

FANS UNDER SCRUTINY

■ From back page

Anyone who has travelled to away games by train will, at some point, have been confronted by the 'Chelsea Conga' – fans linking together in the time-honoured fashion of going up and down the train carriages singing songs that makes what was sung on the Paris Metro pale by comparison.

If Chelsea are to fully eradicate this particular vile action – the chants, not the conga – and prevent these people from attending matches, they need to set in place a comprehensive monitoring system: identify the culprits, collate the evidence and take action – not just when it provokes a national outcry, but all the time.

Chelsea's sorry week ended on Saturday with that 1-1 draw with struggling Burnley. Goalscorer

extraordinaire Branislav Ivanovic notched up his 31st goal for the Blues, his sixth of the season, and significantly his 19th in league matches – just one shy of £50m flop Fernando Torres' gallant total of 20.

In a week of downers, Ivanovic did provide a moment of levity on Saturday. When Nemanja Matic saw red mist and pushed Ashley Barnes, referee Martin Atkinson took out his red card to send off the Serbia midfielder.

Ivanovic then tried to prevent the referee from brandishing it by holding the cards and Atkinson's hand at the same time. It was comical and somewhat endearing. Ivanovic's reward was to receive a yellow card.

Mourinho's post-match press conference was another variation of the recent themes of "I'm not saying anything for fear of getting an FA

charge" but his actions spoke volumes. He is still angry about what he sees as referees failing to give his side stonewall penalties and punishing his players for diving when it's them that have been fouled.

Certainly Chelsea should have had two penalties against Burnley and had Barnes received a deserved red card in the first half for sliding his boot down Ivanovic's calf, he would not have been on the pitch to cut down Matic. Chelsea would definitely have won the game.

On Sunday, Chelsea fans will use the Metropolitan or Jubilee lines to make their way to Wembley Park Tube station. There is always a big police presence on these occasions but I suspect that there will be an even greater number of officers travelling on the tube, keeping an eye on not just what Chelsea and Spurs fans are doing but also what they are saying.

Chelsea's 3-2 extra-time victory against Liverpool in the 2005 League Cup Final brought Mourinho his first trophy as the Blues' boss. Chelsea fans will want revenge for the 2-1 defeat by Spurs at Wembley in the 2008 final of the same competition.

But for Mourinho, it's just another game. "We want to win every game," he said. "Sometimes, like the game against PSG, we couldn't because they were better than us on the night."

Spurs have a Europa League match against Fiorentina in Italy on Thursday, three days before the final, but Mourinho dismissed the suggestion that Spurs might be less prepared and tired before facing his side. "I think it is an advantage for Spurs that

Blue & White In Brief

■ **CHELSEA** Under-18s are through to the FA Youth Cup semi-finals for the sixth year in succession thanks to a hard-fought 3-0 extra-time victory in front of 11,664 at Newcastle.

Izzy Brown saw his fifteenth minute penalty saved before putting Blues ahead in the first period of extra-time at St. James' Park.

Dominic Solanke and Tammy Abraham netted in the second period to send the Blues into the semi-final against either Nottingham Forest or Tottenham.

Chelsea: Collins, Aina, Tomori, Clarke-Salter (Suljic 63), Dasilva, Colkett, Musonda (Palmer 68), Scott (Sammut 97), Solanke, Abraham, Brown.

■ **FULHAM** Under-21s beat Chelsea to book their place in the Premier League International Cup semi-final.

Over-age player Moussa Dembele gave Whites an early lead, which Lewis Baker's penalty cancelled out before Patrick Roberts restored Fulham's lead.

Blues levelled again before the first half was over as Jordan Houghton found the back of the net from 25 yards, and then Ali Suljic put his side in front for the first time in the game midway through the second half.

Suljic's own goal and then Adam Taggart's close-range finish gave the Cottagers victory and sent them into the last four.

Chelsea: Beeny, Dabo, Suljic, Conroy, Wright (Aina 68), Baker, Houghton, Palmer (Musonda 68), Kiwomya (Wakefield 85), Ugbo, Mitchell.

Fulham: Norman, Hoogland, Evans, Donnelly, Buatu, Baba, Roberts (Richards 63), Williams, Taggart, Dembele (Na Bangna 63), Plumain.

Matic is suspended. They have a good squad, with two players for every position."

He also couldn't resist putting it out there for everyone to hear that the match officials will need to keep an eye out for Spurs defender Jan Vertonghen.

"He likes to get cards to the opposition," he said.

Provocative as ever, Mourinho is also a mass of contradictions. Any student of psychiatry would do well to study him – a Nobel Prize would surely follow. And when they do work him out, please let the rest of us know, eh?

● RUGBY UNION

Old Merchant Taylor's... 10
Hammersmith & Fulham ... 30

HAMMERSMITH & Fulham defeated bottom of the league Old Merchant Taylor's (OMT) by 20 points and also claimed the bonus point.

In the first 10 minutes the ball was spun wide and opened up the OMT defence, creating an overlap for James Lo to run in and dot the ball down in the corner. Jack Sarge and Adam Cryer also caught the eye with good structured running and blinding breaks.

Hammers gained their second try from Si Doherty, who sliced through the OMT defence to score under the sticks. Doherty kicked his conversion to put Hammers 12-0 up with still 20 minutes to play in the first half.

OMT started to come back into the game with good ball carrying and a strong set piece. This led to some loss in momentum and eventually Hammers gave away their first try.

With 10 minutes to go H&F started to re-apply pressure to the OMT defence. Their third try came from a poor kick out of hand from the home side's fly half, straight down the throat of Sarge who ran the ball back to cut through the defensive line and score an impressive individual try.

With only two minutes left, Hammers were awarded a penalty from the restart. There was enough time on the clock for the lineup, so Doherty decided to kick to the corner – it was Hammers' last chance of getting the bonus point. The ball was won and spun out to Doherty, who threw a dummy to go through the OMT line and score the final try.

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Saturday, February 28

CHELSEA U18 v Tottenham H. U18, 11.00.

FULHAM U21 v Leicester City U21, 1.00.

FULHAM v Derby County, 3.00.

Sunday, March 1

CHELSEA v Tottenham H. (Capital One Cup Final) at Wembley, 4.00.

Monday, March 2

Liverpool U21 v CHELSEA U21, 7.00.

Tuesday, March 3

Watford v FULHAM, 7.45.

Wednesday, March 4

QPR v Arsenal, 7.45.

West Ham Utd v CHELSEA, 7.45.

IT is always a struggle sniffing out good value bets involving Chelsea these days and Sunday's Capital One Cup Final (the League Cup Final in old money) offers little appeal.

Blues are 8/11 (1.73 in decimal odds) to win in 90 minutes but given their shortage of goals lately, who would risk too much at that skinny price? They are only 4/11 (1.36) to lift the trophy.

Perhaps we'd be better off exploring the First Goalscorer Market. Branislav Ivanovic is 20/1 (21) to keep his amazing run going, while fellow defender John Terry might also be worth a punt at 22/1 (23).

Looking ahead to next Wednesday, even at odds-on (3/4 or 1.75) I'd be tempted to back Chelsea to win at West Ham in the league.

BETTIN£ BANTER

QPR took 2,000-plus fans to Hull but how many optimists among them will have a tilt at the 6/1 (7) against R's beating Arsenal at home next week?

Fulham are another home side whom the bookies don't fancy. You can get 5/2 (3.5) against them seeing off Derby at The Cottage on Saturday. The Rams are favourites due to the fact that they went top of the Championship at the weekend but they have been leaking goals of late, so Whites should take heart. Derby have conceded nine in their last four games.

Tony McDonald

SPORT

Thursday, February 26th, 2015

● SPORTS DESK: 07711 169 427

Chelsea ready for Wembley

CHELSEA's preparations for Sunday's Capital One Cup Final against Spurs won't have been disrupted by the goings-on both on and off the pitch in recent days.

While Jose Mourinho has been acting like a bear with a sore head in his post-match press conferences of late, seeing anti-Chelsea conspiracies everywhere, it's having the desired effect of masking the fact that, on the pitch, his team is struggling to bury the opposition – few chances are being created, resulting in a paucity of goals.

The opposition, while inferior man-for-man, are treading the now well-worn path of denying the Blues space in and around their defensive third of the pitch, thus starving them of the oxygen of creating gilt-edged goal-scoring opportunities.

Chelsea, who no longer play with an out and out winger capable of piercing stubborn defences, find themselves reduced to keep-ball – something the

● By LWN reporter **Paul Lagan**
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opposition are more than happy for them to do.

With 12 Premier League matches to go, the Blues find their seven-point margin at the top reduced to five following a potentially calamitous 1-1 draw at home to Burnley last Saturday.

However, while their league form labours, the Champions League returned in gusto on Tuesday of last week with a little matter of a trip across the English Channel to face Paris St Germain.

This time it was the turn of the Blues to be stifling counter-attack specialists. In a knockout situation, it's a worthwhile tactic.

An honourable 1-1 draw, thanks to the head of Branislav Ivanovic, gives Blues the edge in the top of 16 tie. The return leg at the Bridge (March 11) will be another nervous affair but the away goal could prove pivotal.



Branislav Ivanovic heading Chelsea's goal against PSG in Paris Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

Sadly, it was the off-field incidents that rightly overshadowed the insipid on-field performance by the west Londoners.

Prior to kick-off, outside the Parc des Princes stadium, there were reports that the French police had used tear gas on a section of Chelsea fans. There was relatively little made of this in the UK national press but the club is fully aware of it and are asking for any first-hand accounts from those affected, which will be forwarded in a report to UEFA.

What did make back and front page headlines was the racist incident on the Paris Metro.

Someone on the platform made a mobile phone video recording of the actions of some Chelsea fans preventing a black man from entering the Metro carriage. Twice the man, later identified only as Souleymane S, was pushed out of the carriage with racist chants from the fans echoing round the station.

Chelsea were only made aware of the significance of the actions of these fans when the team was on the tarmac preparing for the return flight to London after the game.

However, they went into full nuclear alert mode and



This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

were very quick to issue all the right and proper press conference, condemning the actions and promising to investigate and take appropriate action against the perpetrators.

The club made full use of Mourinho's pre-match press conference on Friday to hammer home their message that any behaviour considered racist or bigoted would not be tolerated.

Next up was chairman Bruce Buck, using Saturday's match day programme to express the "disgust felt by all at Chelsea" over the incident. John Terry adding to it in his programmes notes too.

The one person who remained tight-lipped amid all this justifiable outcry was the owner, Roman Abramovich. The Russian is also a Jew and no doubt fully aware how racism and prejudice is abhorrent.

His silence was the only disappointment in a reaction that was otherwise textbook perfect.

I suppose the old adage that there is no point in having a dog and barking yourself applies but sometimes the magnitude of the incident, that had gained world-wide notoriety, needs a response from the man right up at the top.

But Abramovich has never spoken publicly about anything relating to Chelsea during his tenure as owner of the club.

Quite what it will take to occur for him to make a statement is anybody's guess. Clearly the people he employs have done their very best and have sent out a strong, consistent message, which they will have to back up with action.

But how nice it would have been to be able to report Abramovich's feeling on the issue.

At the time of going to press on Monday, Chelsea had suspended five fans – all men – from attending Stamford Bridge as a result of investigations. People have tried to suggest that those concerned are not Chelsea fans but it's fairly clear that anyone who travels to France for a Chelsea game is a fan and no amount of denial will alter that.

Should there be sufficient evidence, then the five, and others if identified, will face life bans from SW6.

The victim is considering taking legal action against Chelsea and has so far has refused the club's overtures to an invitation to attend the return match against PSG at Stamford Bridge.

While this incident has made national and international headlines, the fact that it happened will not come as a surprise to any football fan in London who travels by tube to watch their side in a derby match.

On numerous occasions while I have used the London Underground to get to Chelsea matches in the capital, I have encountered the boorish, loutish, racially abusive chants spewing from the mouths of Chelsea fans. Horrible chants about Spurs and Manchester United are their particular favourites.

What occurred in Paris is by no means a one-off.

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE 27



Focus on Craven Cottage

Fulham denied late winner

THE growing argument for football to follow other major sports in adopting a video replay review system to determine the big calls resurfaced again this week.

Despite what paranoid Jose Mourinho thinks, Chelsea are by no means the only club suffering at the hands of inept officials – there are costly blunders littering countless matches at every level of the game throughout the season.

On Saturday Fulham had what looked a perfectly good 86th minute winner at Millwall ruled out for offside.

Hugo Rodallega thought he'd won it for the Whites at The Den when he turned home Kostas Stafylidis' cross – only for the flag to go up on the far side and rule the effort out.

"I thought it was a good goal and it should have stood," said Fulham manager Kit Symons. "I've watched it again. Hugo's level with the man marking him but I think the other defender is probably a yard deeper."

"The linesman's flag went straight up and the referee had to go off that but it was the wrong call. These things happen but it's disappointing, as it would have capped off a fantastic day.

A clean sheet away from home and all three points would have been perfect. It wasn't quite to be but it was hard-fought with a lot of endeavour and effort."

No-one would question the honesty of officials, who only give what they think they see. But the game has become so fast, and the integrity of many cheating, manipulative players so low, that they are in desperate need of outside assistance to ensure that at least they get the most important decisions right.

There is too much at stake for the clubs to continue to trust every offside or penalty shout to the human eye. Fulham are only three places and five points above the relegation zone and if they do end up facing the drop, it could all come down to that linesman's flag.

Although Millwall missed probably the best chance of the game early on, Fulham had enough chances of their own to have taken all three league points from south-east London before Rodallega's winner was ruled out. The Colombian allowed Millwall keeper David Forde to parry his tame near-post shot into the side-netting, while Alex Kacaniklic, Ross McCormack and Lasse Vigen Christensen also wasted good

positions in the penalty area, where they lack ruthlessness.

Perhaps the Fulham forwards were blinded by their garish orange shorts. The traditionalists would have been aghast at the inexplicable decision to abandon their usual black shorts against a team wearing navy and white.

On the plus side, it was Fulham's first clean sheet in the league since December 20, albeit against a side that has only won at home once since August and is currently languishing third from bottom in the Championship.

"It was probably about the right result in the end," added Symons. "They had the better possession and a lot of pressure in the first half but I thought we were the team pushing in the second half. I was disappointed not to get the win but a point in this division is precious, so we'll take that."

Fulham hoped to end their winless run of five games at Wolverhampton Wanderers on Tuesday, before entertaining Championship leaders Derby County at Craven Cottage this Saturday and then visiting another promotion contender, Watford, next Tuesday.

Tony McDonald